MORAL ATTRIBUTION AND THE EVALUATION OF ACTION

By

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MORAL ATTRIBUTION AND THE EVALUATION OF ACTION

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A series of experiments was conducted to investigate an attribution-based theory of moral judgment which emphasizes the impact of three factors on moral evaluations: the perceived quality of the actions committed by a person, the responsibility of the person for the actions, and the ethical ideology of the attributor. These factors were investigated in three experiments in which subjects made moral evaluations about described actors and actions. The first factor, the evaluation of action, was found to be primarily influenced by 1) the consequences of an action and 2) its compatibility with norms of morality. In general, the evaluation of an act was more favorable the more positive its consequences and the more consistent it was with moral norms. However, if the outcomes were extremely positive or extremely negative, highly positive outcomes served to lessen blame for violating a moral norm and enhanced praise for conforming to a norm, while negative outcomes led to a reduction in attributed morality after both violations of and conformity to norms.

The second factor, actor's responsibility, also influenced moral attribution. If the actor was merely associated with or only accidentally

caused an outcome, then the individual was not blamed if the consequences were negative nor commended when the consequences were positive. However, if the actor produced an outcome which he or she foresaw, intended, or produced under environmental pressure, positive outcomes led to greater attribution of morality than negative outcomes. Thus, attribution of responsibility was found to be inversely related to attribution of morality after negative outcomes, but directly related to moral attribution after positive outcomes.

Lastly, moral evaluations varied dependent upon the ethical ideology endorsed by the individual. Following the classification suggested by Schlenker and Forsyth, the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) was developed to measure two factors relevant to moral evaluation: degree of idealism and acceptance of universal moral principles. The two scales which comprised the EPQ were generated using factor analysis and traditional scaling techniques, and analysis of the scales indicated both were psychometrically adequate. When dichotamized and crossed, the EPQ yields a typology consisting of four different ethical ideologies -- idealistic-absolutism, pragmatic-absolutism, idealistic-relativism, and pragmatic-relativism. The attributions of individuals classified as representative of each of these ideologies suggested the idealistic-absolutists attributed the least morality when judging an actor whose behavior produced any negative consequences. They were also the most influenced by the normativeness of the behavior, evaluating non-normative actions more negatively than all other attributors. Pragmatic-absolutists, on the other hand, were generally the most favorable in their attributions, perhaps because of their emphasis of the positive

consequences of action. For these attributors, the evaluation of positive consequences and not the evaluation of negative consequences was related to attributions of morality.

Idealistic and pragmatic-relativists were the most likely to allow highly positive consequences mitigate blame for actions which were inconsistent with a moral standard. This was particularly true for pragmatic-relativists who, for example, attributed more morality to the person who lied in order to produce a positive outcome than to the person who told the truth but caused a negative outcome. Idealistic-relativists' attributions of morality, unlike the attributions made by individuals in all the other ethical ideologies, were correlated with their evaluations of both positive and negative consequences, suggesting they take into account both types of information when making attributions.

CHAPTER ONE

AN ATTRIBUTIONAL APPROACH TO MORAL JUDGMENT

Interacting individuals must frequently determine the moral acceptability of performed or planned actions. Since immoral behavior incurs negative sanctions in many interpersonal situations, participants must be able to predict how other people are going to evaluate the things they do if they wish to avoid such sanctions. In addition to anticipating the reactions of others to personally performed behavior, the moral quality of other people's actions must also be appraised. A pattern of conflict-free interaction implies that individuals are able to both restrict their behaviors so that they do not conflict too greatly with society's conception of morality, as well as make ethical judgments about other's actions. Since future interactions are often greatly affected by any conclusions drawn about morality, judgments of ethicality can influence a wide range of individual and interpersonal behavior.

In the past the study of moral judgment has been relegated by psychologists to the realm of moral philosophy. More recently, however, interest in the psychology of moral judgment has been revived largely through research investigating individual variations in moral reasoning and the determinants of responsibility allocation. Rather than providing support for the idea of uniformity in moral reasoning, the research of developmental psychologists such as Piaget (1932/1960) and Kohlberg (1968) suggests that people make their judgments in different ways.

While not disagreeing with those philosophers and psychologists who note the high degree of agreement between adult judges concerning the morality of "clear" cases, these researchers suggest that this uniformity may reflect similarity in conclusions rather than similarity in moral judgment processes. Individuals may employ different standards, different comparative processes, or wholely disparate criteria in their judgments of the behaviors of others, and while these different processes often result in agreement across judges, the moral reasoning underlying this apparent agreement is quite different.

The second area of research that has stimulated interest in moral judgment processes has focused on the factors which will lead a perceiver to hold other individuals responsible for actions and their consequences. The notion of responsibility is fundamental to a system of ethics since, as the prominent philosopher of law H. L. A. Hart (1968) notes, it is the mediating link between the individual and societal sanctions. An explanation of responsibility allocation in everyday interactions has been advanced by researchers working within attribution theory, which is a broad social psychological framework that describes how individuals make inferences about what characteristics other people possess. Although the attribution theory approach is generally concerned with how people determine when behavior reflects the existence of underlying traits, theory and research suggest that responsiblity determination lies at the heart of the attribution process.

This treatise draws together both research investigating how people differ in their approaches to making moral judgments and studies of attributional processes to specify some of the major determinants of

moral judgment. Chapter One begins by placing the question into an attribution theory framework which assumes that moral judgment fundamentally depends upon two integrally related processes: the determination of responsibility for action and evaluation of the moral quality of the act itself. Chapter Two reviews the theory and research of the cognitive developmentalists Piaget and Kohlberg relevant to individual differences in moral reasoning, as well as several alternative approaches to individual variability. One such approach, suggested by Schlenker and Forsyth (1977), was used as the model for a measure of individual ethical ideology, and the characteristics of the measurement instrument which was developed are discussed in Chapter Three. Three experiments, which examined the predictive utility of the measure and several hypotheses about the effects of responsibility, consequences, and ethical ideology on moral attribution are described in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, while Chapter Seven discusses the obtained results and suggests several conclusions.

The Attribution of Responsibility

Complex forms of social behavior require that interacting individuals can competently perceive and interpret cues concerning the qualities and characteristics of others, can decipher and understand the nature of ongoing interaction, and can gather and weigh the available information pertaining to the causes of environmental and interpersonal events. Despite the seeming complexity of these tasks, most people can perform them well enough, without any apparent directed effort or organization of the cognitive processes involved. In explanation, Heider (1958)

proposed that individuals achieve an understanding of the world around them by utilizing certain intuitive "common-sense psychology" principles; principles which offer basic explanations of the events, individuals, and entities they encounter. As Heider (p. 2) states, "the ordinary person has a great and profound understanding of himself and of other people which, though unformulated and only vaguely conceived, enables him to interact with others in more or less adaptive ways."

Attribution theory, a social psychological analysis of the processes involved in perceiving the causes of behaviors and events, focuses on what information people employ to gain an understanding of their social environment. In his highly influential The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations (1958), Heider proposed that the perceiver's goal, like that of the scientist, is to understand reality and to become able to predict and control events in the environment. The individual in a social world accomplishes this goal by achieving an understanding of the relatively stable foundational properties of the environment that produce the more dynamic and variable events. These attributions about inferred underlying causal sources enable the perceiver to systematically organize observed behaviors and promotes extrapolation to other possible situations. The attributor's world is thus reduced from a meaningless chaos of events to an understandable unfolding of predictable events and outcomes.

Heider's attribution theory, in part derived from the insights of Piaget (1932/1960), carefully examined the effects of how inferences made about other interactants influence the course of social behavior. Heider and later attribution theorists such as Jones (Jones & Davis, 1965) and Kelley (1967) propose that one of the most important factors influencing

moral attribution is the degree to which the actor is seen as responsible for producing the act under evaluation. Within attribution theory, responsibility refers to the degree of perceived relationship between an actor and an act; the extent to which the actor is seen as linked to the act in a unit relationship (Heider, 1958). An individual who is perceived to be responsible for some action is judged to be accountable or answerable for that activity, or judged to be open to positive or negative sanctions as a consequence of being linked to the event (cf., Heider, 1958; Shaw & Sulzer, 1964). All propose that individuals can infer a great deal about a person's dispositions and characteristics by observing that person's actions in various situations, but that any attributions made are dependent to some extent on responsibility attributions. For example, if a person is forced into performing some act, then the nature of the action and the consequences are not, in a strict sense, caused by the actor alone. The actor is therefore less responsible for the act than if he freely chose to perform it, and so little can be said about the actor's underlying disposition toward the activity. What is required is a situation in which the person freely decides upon what course of action to take and can determine what consequences are to be sought after and achieved.

The extent to which the actor is seen as responsible depends upon the perceived influence of internal and external forces on the activity or actor under scrutiny. For Heider (p. 56), "behavior can be ascribed primarily to the person or to the environment; that is, behavior can be accounted for by relatively stable traits of personality or by factors within the environment." Focusing on the balance between internal and

external determinants of behavior, Heider suggested five levels of responsibility attribution which differ by degree of intentionality, association, and external justification. These five levels, as described by Shaw and Sulzer (1964, pp. 39-40), are presented in Table 1-1. At the first level, that of association, the actor is held responsible for any actions which he is connected with in even the slightest way, no matter how remote. At the level of causality, however, the actor is held responsible only for effects that he has caused in a more direct sense. At this level the degree to which the actor could foresee the consequences of his actions is not taken into account by the attributor as it is at the third level, foreseeability. The individual at this level is held to be responsible for the produced event even though he may not have "set out to achieve it, either as a means or an end" (Hart, 1968, p. 120). At the fourth level, intentionality, attribution of responsibility depends not only on the demonstration of foreseeability of consequences, but on intentions as well. This is the most psychologically informative kind of perceiver data, available when a person voluntarily performs a given action in order to achieve a certain foreseeable goal of a certain societally determined quality.

At the last level, justification, the person is held only partially responsible for intentional actions due to the influence of various factors. Although Heider and Shaw and Sulzer emphasize the impact of external factors, internal factors can also reduce responsibility at this level. Heider draws the distinction between internal factors which determine if the actor "can" perform the action and those external variables which influence whether or not the actor "may" perform the action. Similarly, Steiner (1970) suggests that perceived freedom

Table 1-1

Heider's Levels of Responsibility

LEVEL I: ASSOCIATION (Global Association)

The person is held responsible for any effect that he is connected with in any way. Responsibility is determined by pseudocausal reasoning rather than by consideration of objective causal connections. Thus, the individual may be blamed for harmful acts committed by friends.

LEVEL II: CAUSALITY (Extended Commission)

The person is held responsible for any effect that he produced by his actions, even though he definitely could not have foreseen these consequences.

LEVEL III: FORESEEABILITY (Careless Commission)

The person is held responsible for any foreseeable effect that he produced by his actions even though the effect was not a part of his goals or intentions. He is held responsible for the lack of restraint that a wider cognitive field would have produced.

LEVEL IV: INTENTIONALITY (Purposive Commission)

The person is held responsible for any effect that he produced by his actions, foreseeing the outcome and intending to produce the effect.

LEVEL V: JUSTIFICATION (Justified Commission)

The person is held only partly responsible for any effect that he intentionally produced if the circumstances were such that most persons would have felt and acted as he did. That is, responsibility for the act is at least shared by the coercive environment.

Note: Source is Shaw and Sulzer, 1964.

depends upon judgments of the actor's (a) ability to perform the action and (b) the restrictiveness of environmental influences. For example, if a man witnessing a drowning does not possess the ability to swim, then his responsibility for the failure to save the victim's life would be lessened. A similar reduction in responsibility would also be observed if environmental factors, such as sharks or a strong undertow, prevented successful intervention in the emergency.

Heider's model of attribution can be interpreted in two related ways. He implies that individuals, depending upon developmental and situational factors, may be level-specific in their attributions, and second, that attribution of responsibility is greatest for actions intentionally caused by the actor who foresees the relevant consequences, but decreases with the introduction of such factors as unforeseeability and external pressure. As an example of the first interpretation, in some cases individuals may base their responsibility judgments on the elements at the level of foreseeability rather than considering such aspects as intentionality or coercive pressure (cf. Fishbein & Ajzen, 1973; Ross & Ditecco, 1975; Shaw & Sulzer, 1964). Ross and Ditecco emphasize this interpretation, suggesting that moral judgment will be greatly affected by the concept of responsibility adopted by the evaluator. They note that four factors influence the sophistication of attributions of responsibility made by adults, including specification by an external source (as when a judge instructs a jury as to the degree of responsibility needed to find a person guilty of first degree murder), motivations (such as ego-defensiveness), semantics (e.g., the impact of labels such as "traitor" versus "patriot"), and the context of the interaction (e.g., between short-term versus long-term friends).

The second interpretation of the levels suggests that they specify the key elements in the responsibility attribution process. Empirical investigations of Heider's levels of attribution of responsibility attribution have generally supported this interpretation of the theory by finding a curvilinear relationship between attribution of responsibility and responsibility level (e.g., Shaw, 1968; Shaw, Briscoe, & Garcia-Esteve, 1968; Shaw, Floyd, & Gwin, 1971; Shaw & Reitan, 1969; Shaw & Sulzer, 1964). For example, Shaw and Sulzer (1964) contrasted differences in attributional tendencies for adults and second graders in the initial investigation of Heider's levels. After presenting subjects with a series of short scenarios that described different situations containing the minimum variables necessary to elicit attribution at each of the five levels, subjects were asked to rate the responsiblity of the actor in each story. Although the outcome of the action affected the children's attributions more than the adults' attributions, both groups did increase responsibility allocation over the first four levels. In addition, responsibility dropped for the level five situations.

The Evaluation of Action

A young couple, before deciding to get married, live together for over a year in a small apartment; three black men, barely old enough to be out of high school, rob and kill a liquor store owner; a clerk, working two jobs to put his younger brother through college, volunteers to serve as a youth counselor in his spare time; a father viciously beats his child for no apparent reason; a student cheats on an exam; a housewife cancels plans to join an elite social club in order to have enough time to do volunteer work at the local hospital; a burglary suspect lies to

his interrogator; a young man saves three children from death in a burning house but dies himself while trying to rescue a fourth. All these examples describe people performing actions which can be appraised as either morally "good" or morally "bad." Attribution theory, with its emphasis on the allocation of responsibility, describes the factors which determine when a person's actions are used as indicators of his dispositions, but the importance of the evaluation of the action itself should not be overlooked. Clearly, how a person is morally appraised is determined not only be degree of responsibility, but by the moral evaluation of the action as well.

Heider attempts to incorporate action evaluation into his analysis of moral judgment via the concept "ought." According to Heider, an ought is defined as a normative expectancy which serves as a standard to which all behavior can be compared. These oughts are "standards of what ought to be done or experienced, standard independent of the individual's wishes" (p. 219). Heiter cites Asch (1952, p. 357) who points out that "action that fits the requirements we judge to be appropriate or right; to fail to act appropriately we experience as violating a demand, or being unjust." This usage of ought is similar to Hollingworth's (1949, p. 3), who writes "the key to morals or ethics is the feeling of obligation, the recognition of imperatives in thought and action." Behavior which is irrelevant to this feeling of obligation "transforms mere behavior into conduct." Thus, moral judgment depends fundamentally on evaluating conduct in relation to some standard or set of expectations. If the action is consistent with prescriptive standards then, by definition, it <u>ought</u> to

be done and is judged to be moral. If, on the other hand, the action is one which ought not be done since it violates some proscriptive standard, then the action is immoral.

Heider's concept of ought carries with it two assumptions. First, oughts are taken to be trans-situationally applicable. For any particular moral evaluator, oughts "refer to invariant standards, to 'laws of conduct' which hold in spite of many variations in incidental or momentary factors" (p. 230). While there are certain limits to these ought invariances, such as when the circumstances of a situation are judged to be unique, in general the same ought should be applicable to a range of relevant situations. Second, oughts are assumed to have transpersonal validity. As would be consistent with an intuitionist ethical philosophy, oughts can be directly perceived; therefore, irrespective of personal ethical values or culture, all people "should perceive the same ought requirements in a particular situation" (p. 222). Heider summarizes his explanation of the concept of ought by describing it as "a cognized wish or requirement of a suprapersonal objective order which has an invariant reality, and whose validity therefore transcends the point of view of any one person" (p. 222).

Limitations of Heider's 'ought'. While the concept of ought or duty is recognized by many philosophers as an important element in the moral sphere, its application in a psychological explanation of moral judgment encounters several problems. First, the term has an ambiguous meaning due to its frequent and long-standing use in philosophical and lay discourse. Hollingworth (1949), for example, contends that the word ought has as many as ten distinct meanings, and philosophically the term

seems to have almost as many different meanings as philosophers who use it (cf. Aiken, 1952; Kant, 1873/1973; Prichard, 1952; Sellars, 1952).

Second, the approach may preclude the possibility of an individual being a moral skeptic who does not rely on ought principles in making moral judgments of others. Such an approach to ethics has been taken by several philosophers such as Hume and Fletcher (Jones et al., 1962), who argue that situational variations make general statements about what ought to be done inapplicable. Although the existence of a prescriptive philosophical position which rejects the assumption that inviolate moral principles can be formulated does not "prove" that these oughts are not utilized at the psychological level, the existence of individuals who can be regarded as "common-sense moral skeptics" is an empirical issue.

Lastly, simply stating that an action that is compatible with an ought is judged to be moral while an action that is incompatible is judged to be immoral does little to clarify the nature or origin of oughts themselves. An ought is conceptually a universal norm which is a part of the interpersonal regulatory system of all societies. However, the existence of such universal norms has yet to be supported empirically. Also, Heider fails to provide answers to such puzzles as "How does the ought arise?"; "What situations are unique enough to prevent the application of ought requirements?" (e.g., Why is killing during wartime condoned?); and "What universal features of human existence can account for the invariant perception of social oughts?"

Oughts and actions, actors and achievement. A partial solution to the problem of oughts as standards for interpersonal judgment has been suggested by Kelley (1971). Kelley's main objective is to deal with moral

evaluation within the context of other types of attributional processes, with particular focus on reality evaluation and achievement evaluation. He points out that two characteristics which Heider ascribes to oughts are consistency across time and modalities and concensus among persons. These two features are the major defining qualities of an external attribution (see Kelly, 1967), and so oughts are seen as being non-personal, external entities that are objectively real. Ought perceptions thus follow the same process as that of reality evaluation, which relies on consistency, distinctiveness, and concensus information.

For example, an attributor may believe that murder ought not be committed, that it is immoral. The individual may attribute this ought and moral reaction to either an external source or an internal source. If internal, the person could conclude that he is just the "kind of a person who doesn't like to see people murdered." If external, however, the person could conclude that murder is wrong, that it is the act itself which determines his reaction rather than his own personal characteristics. Kelley maintains that an external explanation is supported by the perceiver's common-sense attributional data since (a) concensus among others who judge that act is high, that is, they all condemn murder, (b) the person's reaction is consistent across time and situations, and (c) reaction to this particular class of behaviors is distinctive; that is, the attributor does not react in a similar manner to other kinds of interactions. Thus oughts become a "matter of fact, to be discriminated and judged consistently and to be validated concensually, just as other aspects of reality are so discriminated and validated" (Kelley, 1971, p. 294). Actions which violate oughts are judged immoral, while actions

which are consistent with oughts are judged moral. Concensus among members of a particular culture regarding an ought need not be perfect, although this is the usual case with some types of behavior (e.g., murder, theft, rape, etc.).

Kelley is most concerned with the conditions which determine when the individual will be judged responsible for a morally "good" action, and not with the conditions which determine the moral evaluation of a person who performs a "bad" action. In the context of the evaluations of positive actions, the attributed externality of oughts has a great impact. Kelley suggests that because oughts are seen as external entities, they may be perceived as exogenous causal forces which require the individual to act appropriately in the given situation (cf. Bem's "mand," 1967). Thus, the attributor may not conclude that any special characteristic in the observed individual need be inferred when action is ought compatible since an external, interpersonal factor -- the ought -- is the actual cause of the "good" behavior. For example, the individual who refrains from murdering his neighbor is not seen as being particularly moral since his behavior is clearly ought-required. As Ross and Ditecco (1975) suggest, "there is an asymmetry in assignment of credit or blame. Blame is often attributed for failure to adhere to an ought standard, but mere adherence may receive little praise" (p. 93).

Although Kelley's analysis clarifies the origin of the assumption that oughts are universal, his analysis ignores an important distinction between judging a person to be moral and judging a person to be morally commendable. Certainly examples can be cited in which the individual who performs an action which is prescribed by an ought voluntarily,

intentionally, and with foreseeability of consequences is judged to be moral. For example, if an attributor (P) embraces the ought "people should contribute small sums of money to charity" and observes a person voluntarily and intentionally give a small sum to charity, then it does not seem improbable for P to conclude that the giver is moral. However, to be seen as morally commendable, the observed individual would need to give a large sum to charity to actually surpass the action required by the norm.

In addition, although high agreement is often obtained among individuals of the same cultural grouping concerning the morality of certain kinds of actions, far less agreement is achieved when the moral quality of other types of actions is discussed. People will, for example, often agree that it is wrong to lie, steal, murder, or rape, but disagree about whether abortion, mercy-killing, or premarital sex is moral.

The Attribution of Morality

The essence of moral judgment is captured and formalized in the dynamics of the courtroom. Judge and jury, who take the part of the attributor, are exposed to information that pertains to the defendant's (actor's) responsibility for some legally questionable action. The prosecution is primarily concerned with establishing that 1) some action has been done which runs counter to a judicial statute and hence is illegal and 2) that the defendant is the person responsible for committing the act and producing its consequences. The defense, on the other hand, presents evidence which is designed to disprove either one or both of

these contentions and hence protect the defendant from the possibility of sanction.

As with judicial proceedings, interpersonal attributions concerning the morality of others depend upon the perceived relationship between the actor and action plus the nature of the act itself. The work of both Heider and Shaw demonstrates that the responsibility attributed to the individual varies depending upon such factors as judged foreseeability of consequences and the freedom and intentions ascribed to the actor. However, even if the actor is viewed as responsible for the action and its consequences, this does not necessarily imply that the individual's morality is reflected in his actions. In many instances, the act itself is evaluated as one which is either morally commendable or morally reprehensible before attributions about the actor's ethicality are made. For example, a student who is responsible for his failing performance on a psychology test may be judged as ignorant of certain facets of psychology. However, he would not be considered immoral unless failing the examination was judged to be an immoral action.

The Perception of Aggression

The impact of both responsibility and action evaluation on the attribution of morality is apparent in recent research (Feshbach, 1971; Tedeschi, Smith & Brown, 1974) investigating when an action will be labeled "aggression." While Tedeschi et al. conclude that the scientific usage of the term aggression has proven problematic, they do suggest that aggression is "important as a label used by naive observers in characterizing actors" since the "labeling of behavior as aggressive has an important function in the assignment of moral responsibility and

mediation of retribution" (p. 557). Tedeschi et al. propose that the analysis of the common usage of the term reveals that aggressive actions are those that are not only viewed as intended constraints on the behavioral alternatives of another person, but also must be evaluated by the perceiver as anti-normative and illegitimate. While other factors (i.e., physical characteristics) influence the attribution of aggression, only the three characteristics of intentionality, constraint, and illegitimacy are necessary and sufficient conditions.

Similarly, Feshbach (1971, p. 289) considers how violence is evaluated by members of society and emphasizes the situational nature of violence evaluation; "violent acts with the same formal characteristics -- for example, one man killing another -- are evaluated by most people very differently depending on the context in which the act occurs." He suggests several factors which affect evaluations, with the most important being the degree to which the act conflicts with either the formal (i.e., laws) or informal ("oughts") norms of society. A second factor, the self-serving nature of the action, also influences the categorization of a violent act, as does the actor's degree of responsibility for the action under scrutiny. Feshbach suggests that the degree of responsibility attributed to the actor is influenced by the ascribed level of choice available (as indicated by the number of alternatives open to the individual), the initiator of the interaction (defensiveness or offensiveness of the action), the degree to which the actor is aware of the nature and quality of the acts performed, the stability of the actor in terms of ability to distinguish right from wrong, intentionality, and degree of ego-control. Finally, miscellaneous

influences are suggested, including "normative considerations of fair play, the degree and manner of the violence, the age and sex of the victim, and more generally, the appropriateness of the target" (p. 290).

Although neither Tedeschi et al. nor Feshbach provide a clear theoretical structure for dealing with the evaluation of violence, their analyses do summarize the basic processes involved in moral attribution by emphasizing both responsibility and act evaluation. Also, both note the importance of the circumstances surrounding the action on its evaluation since a great many factors can determine whether the act is viewed as consistent or inconsistent with a moral standard. Lastly, each denies that evaluative conclusions reached concerning actions will be universally shared since the perspective of the attributor is a crucial variable to consider. Feshbach points out that the attributor's attitude towards the objective of the violence will have great effects on the evaluation reached, and Tedeschi et al. conclude "that no action can be identified as aggressive or violent without taking into account the value system of the perceiver" (p. 557). Even within a single culture, variations in personal values have been found to greatly affect the moral evaluation of violent actions (e.g., Feshbach & Feshbach, 1969; Opton & Duckless, 1970). This problem raises the issue of the impact of individual variations on moral judgment, which is the topic dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

Actions, Responsibility, and Morality: Conclusions

A conceptualization of moral judgment based on attribution theory and research proposes that moral attribution, defined to be the process

by which an individual formulates appraisals of the moral goodness or badness of others, is primarily determined by the interfusion of attribution of responsibility and action evaluation processes. In a simple instance, the moral attribution process begins with an attributor who considers information concerning the quality of the particular behavior under scrutiny, and the actor who performed (or is perceived to be related in some other way to) the behavior. While many factors could potentially influence evaluations of actions, this analysis emphasizes how the consequences of the action and the compatibility of the action with moral standards influence action evaluation. All other things being equal, the evaluation of an act should vary directly with the quality of the consequences produced, such that actions which result in "good" outcomes are more positively evaluated than ones which produce negative outcomes.

However, the evaluation of an action will also be influenced by the compatibility of the act with moral standards or "oughts." As several theorists suggest (e.g., Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1971; Kohlberg, 1971), moral evaluations are greatly influenced by whether or not the perceiver believes the action is consistent or inconsistent with society's norms of morality. As Shaw's (1976, p. 250) conceptualization of norms suggests, moral norms are interpersonal "rules of conduct established by the members of the group to maintain behavioral consistency." These standards for appropriate action "represent standardized generalizations concerning expected behavior in matters that are of some importance to the group" and they "refer to what should be done" in any given situation. At a general level, then, the attributor's evaluation of an action depends upon (a) the quality of the consequences of the action and (b) the act's consistency with moral norms.

The second factor in the attribution of morality process involves judgments of the actor's responsibility for the action. As attribution of responsibility theorists (e.g., Heider, 1958; Shaw & Sulzer, 1964) note, greater responsibility will be attributed to the actor to the extent that internal, personal factors are perceived to have caused the outcome rather than external, situational factors. The moral evaluation of a previously unknown actor thus depends to a great extent on responsibility and action ascriptions. The greater the responsibility of the actor for the action, then the greater the perceptual correspondence between the moral evaluation of the action and the moral evaluation of the actor. While other factors, such as prior estimates of the actor's morality and the ethical perspective adopted by the attributor may also influence moral judgment, attributionally action evaluation and attribution of responsibility are crucial determinants of the attribution of morality.

CHAPTER TWO

INDIVIDUAL ORIENTATIONS TOWARDS ETHICAL ISSUES

In the late 1950's, Lawrence Kohlberg began investigating some of the factors that influence peoples' moral reactions to others (1959). Not surprisingly, he found that when people were asked to make judgments about others described in various ethical dilemmas that he had constructed, judges disagreed about the morality of the actors. Some would condemn the person as immoral, while others would commend the person for his morality and sense of duty. More interesting, however, was Kohlberg's conclusion that the reasoning processes underlying these judgments about morality of others did not seem to be the same across all the judges. In fact, there was apparently a wide range of variability in the approaches people took in making moral judgments, with some individuals being influenced more by certain variables, while other individuals focused on a quite different set of factors.

Kohlberg's investigation of moral judgment, while certainly not the first research into the process, did clearly indicate that individuals may differ in the manner in which they make judgments of the morality of others. Given the importance of understanding the impact of possible individual variations on the attributional processes described in the previous chapter, this chapter examines the question in detail. After reviewing the cognitive-developmental approach to individual differences as captured in the work of Piaget and Kohlberg, problems relating to

cultural biases, content orientation, and psychometric difficulties are suggested. The cognitive-developmental approach is then contrasted with Schlenker and Forsyth's (1977) examination of variations in individuals' orientations toward ethical issues, and conclusions are drawn about the adequacies of the two approaches.

The Cognitive-Developmental Approach

The cognitive-developmental approach to the dynamics of human maturation has yielded one of the most influential theories of moral development. The prominent theorizing of Piaget (1932/1960) and Kohlberg (1959, 1964, 1968, 1969, 1971, 1976) shares a common focus on organism-environment interaction that results in the development of increasingly sophisticated cognitive structures in the organism. This interaction leads to stages of cognitive development, which represent the restructuring of the preceding cognitive schemata into increasingly complex structures in a metastatic process. These stages represent qualitatively different levels of cognitive processing, as thought is reorganized to increased levels of cognitive integration and differentiation.

Moral judgment develops in a similar process, since the "age developmental trends in moral judgment have a formal cognitive base parallel to the structural base of cognitive development" (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 390). As with cognitive development, the process of moralization moves through a series of discontinuous stages. Corollaries which accompany the stage assumption include: (a) these stages are order-invariant, so that the higher level stages cannot be reached except by passing through the lower level stages; (b) while the order and number of stages is invariant, the end-points of the developmental sequences

may differ for individuals, and the time required for passing through the various stages may differ by individual and culture; and (c) the movement from one stage to another is a gradual process, the result of assimilation of incoming information to fit existing structure and the accommodation of the cognitive structure to fit the incoming information. Although a number of theories of morality are based on a stage approach to development (cf. Bull, 1969; Bobroff, 1960; Kay, 1968; McDougall, 1908), only the two most prominent theories, those of Piaget and Kohlberg, will be given detailed consideration.

Before examining the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg, however, their relevance to understanding individual variations in making moral judgments should be made explicit. Although the cognitive developmentalist is concerned with the broader issue of the moralization of the individual, the postulation of a developmental sequence suggests that individuals can be at different stages, and that their moral judgments will necessarily be influenced by the stage they have attained. Therefore, in order to reach a complete understanding of the dynamics underlying individuals moral judgments, the range of possible variations in the judgment process must be explored. For example, Piaget suggests that certain key elements, such as consequences and actor's intentionality determine moral judgments. However, the impact of these variables depends upon the moral development of the child; if he or she is not yet "morally mature," the consequence information may be more influential than intentions information. Thus, the analysis of moralization yields a theoretically defensible classification system which specifies important variations in individuals' approaches to making moral judgments.

Piaget's Cognitive-Developmentalism

In his classic work, The Moral Judgment of the Child (1932/1960), Piaget extends his studies of cognitive development to the area of moral evaluations made concerning a variety of human behavior, including lies, accidents, and thefts. Piaget's method consisted of presenting a child with pairs of narratives that described two actions that culminated in a given negative outcome. Children were asked to decide which of the two perpetrators of the negative outcome was "naughtiest," and to explain their choice. For example, to examine the effects of the severity of the consequences of behavior on its moral evaluation, Piaget constructed parallel stories, one describing how an actor accidentally produced a large, negative outcome while attempting to perform some well-intentioned action, while the actor in the comparison story produced a much smaller negative outcome, but did so under mischievious circumstances.

Moral heteronomy. Drawing inferences from the childrens' responses during these interviews, Piaget theorized that the evolution of moral judgment in the child progresses through two major cognitive-developmental stages. The first stage, that of heteronomy, is characterized by obedience to others' orders and moral realism. Heteronomous thought, a term which Piaget borrowed from Kant, occurs when the child believes that it is right to obey the will of an adult and wrong to have self-will. Moral realism refers to the child's tendency to "regard duty and the value attaching to it as self-subsistent and independent of mind, as imposing itself regardless of the circumstances in which the person may find himself (Piaget, 1960, p. 111). The three major aspects of moral realism include: (a) Good is defined as conformity to rules, which are

to be obeyed, not judged or interpreted; (b) the letter rather than the spirit of the rule is to be obeyed, since the rule is not truly understood nor internalized; and (c) the criterion for blame and punishment is the degree of objective responsibility of the actor, which Piaget defines as the evaluation of the "act, not in accordance with the motive that prompted them, but in terms of their exact conformity to established rules" (pp. 111-112).

This moral realism is the result of the "intersection of two kinds of causes," egocentrism and the morality of constraint. Egocentrism, for Piaget, is typified by the child's inability to decenter -- to shift his or her attention from one aspect of an object or an event -- and by the inability to perceive a situation from another's point of view. The morality of constraint is characterized by unilateral respect, an unexamined sense of duty, and by heteronomy. "The child accepts from the adult a certain number of commands to which it [sic] must submit whatever the circumstances; wrong is what fails to do so; the intention plays a very small part in this conception, and responsibility is entirely objective" (Piaget, 1960, p. 335).

Moral autonomy. Gradually, reorganization of the cognitive bases of moral thought shifts moral judgment to a higher stage. This shift is the result of a number of processes, particularly the reduction of egocentrism and the replacement of the morality of constraint with the morality of cooperation. The decrease in egocentrism is the result of a growth in cognitive ability which allows the child to "take the role of the other" in social interactions. The morality of cooperation, which subsumes the ideals of mutual respect for others in reciprocity-governed

interaction, is generated through equalitarian interactions with peers resulting in the internalization of rules and the reasons for their importance. For Piaget's subjects, this shift occurred between the years of seven and nine, and culminated in the attainment of the second stage of moral development, autonomy. The child's behaviors are governed by the adult morality of cooperation, so that the behaviors are engaged in for their own sake and not because of contingent sanctions. Rules are seen as necessary for the maintenance of cooperation, but may be changed by mutual agreement. Subjective responsibility criteria replace the objective, mutual respect usurps unilateral respect, moral realism becomes moral relativism, and the concept of expiatory punishment is replaced by reciprocal punishment.

The differences between heteronomous and autonomous stages of moral thought are demonstrated in the following examples of two childrens' responses after being told a pair of stories about how some cups were broken; one story told of fifteen cups being broken unintentionally by a child entering a room, and a second story depicted a single cup being broken by a jam-stealing child (Piaget, 1960, pp. 125 & 130, respectively):

Constance (Age 7)

If you were their mother, which one would you punish most severely?

---The one who broke the cups.

Is he the naughtiest?

---Yes.

Why did he break them?

---Because he wanted to get into the room.

And the other?

---Because he wanted to take the jam.

Which one of them would you punish most severely?

---The one who broke the fifteen cups.

Nus (Age 10)
Which of them is the naughtiest?
---The naughtiest is the one who wanted to take the jam.
Does it make any difference the other having broken more cups?
---No, because the one who broke the fifteen cups didn't do it on purpose.

Kohlberg's Six Stages of Moral Reasoning

The theorizing and research of Kohlberg (1959, 1964; 1968; 1969; 1971; 1976) argues from a Piagetian-rooted cognitive-developmental perspective that dynamic processes of cognitive growth result in the progressive reorganization of perceptions, conceptual abilities, and judgments of morality. Like Piaget, Kohlberg conducted interviews with children, and he concluded that three distinct levels were reflected in childrens' responses, with each level being comprised of two discernable stages. At the preconventional level, obedience to authority is stressed for hedonistic reasons such as maximization of personal gain or avoidance of punishment. Stage 1 children, like Piaget's heteronomous thinkers, accept without question imposed rules of conduct without interpreting their fairness or bases. At Stage 2, however, focus is shifted towards self-interest, as the child attempts to maximize his own personal gains without consideration of the needs of others.

The hallmark of the second level, conventional thought, is conformity. The child at this level is concerned with acting in accordance with the expectations of society, and also attempts to support these rules. Stage 3 is characterized by attempts to gain credit by careful conformity to stereotypical images of what are appropriate behaviors. Kohlberg notes that intentionality affects responsibility delegations at this stage, but that too much emphasis is sometimes placed on motives, with the result

that "nice" intentions are sometimes cited as mitigating excuses for a careless action. Stage 4, on the other hand, is typified by an authority and social order orientation. At this stage "right behavior consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the given social order for its own sake" (Kohlberg, 1968, p. 26).

The final level, postconventional or autonomous, stresses independence from concern with obedience to existing societal impositions. Behavior is guided by inner principles, which are held apart from those recommended by society. Stage 5 morality, which is apparently derived from a social contract morality, stresses the difference between personal values and legal rules of conduct. While laws are recognized as beneficial for society-at-large, they are not held to be infallible and hence may be altered. Finally, Stage 6 morality is humanistic, a morality of respect for others as individuals, for the equality of all, and of justice as equity; behavior is guided by individually derived moral principles held by the individual to be comprehensive, logically consistent, and universally applicable.

In sum, both Piaget and Kohlberg hypothesize that individuals functioning at the various stages of moral development can be identified by both the content of their rules and by the reasons they adopt them. Piaget perceptively detects the tension between conformity requirements and demands for individuality (cf. Kelley, 1971; Ziller, 1964), and proposes that immature individuals resolve the dilemma by avoiding individuality, while mature adults face the problem by embracing equalitarian principles of authomomy, cooperation, and mutual respect. Both the mature and immature are principled, but the principles of the

young are unexamined and blindly followed, while the principles of the adult are internalized and understood. In addition, a single set of principles or rules is accepted by the adult or "morally mature" members of society, sharing similarity in content and motivational bases. For Piaget, all mature individuals base their moralities on seeking autonomy while maintaining cooperative and equitable relationships with others. Although Kohlberg's analysis is more detailed than Piaget's, it shares a similar stress on autonomy as an end-point of moral development and the acceptance of rules for equalitarian reasons.

Applications and Limitations of the Cognitive-Developmental Approach

Although the research generated by the cognitive-developmental perspective has been substantial, several problems are encountered when the framework is used to explain individual variability in moral ideology. Fundamentally, most of these criticisms revolve around two basic issues: (a) mixing philosophical notions of ethics within a psychological theory of moral judgment and (b) the methods used to measure stage attainment.

Philosophical foundations. The theories of both Piaget and Kohlberg are based on an ethical philosophy that dates back to Aristotle and finds expression in the ethics of such philosophers as Kant, Hobbes, Bradley, and Frankena. In his Nicomachean Ethics (Thomson [trans.], 1953), Aristotle stresses the idea that the highest good is what the individual seeks "for its own sake and never for the sake of some other thing" (p. 36). Morality can be achieved by being "self-sufficient," yet at the same time conforming to the golden mean and avoiding activities which conflict with accepted norms. Incorporating this notion of morality into their scientific explanation of the psychology of moral judgment, Piaget implicitly and Kohlberg explicitly assume that autonomy

and cooperation are the bases of "mature morality," making any morality based on other considerations immoral or immature.

Simpson (1974, p. 87) argues that this assumption of both theories undermines their scientific status, providing an example of the "ascendency of the moral philosopher over the empirical scientist." Focusing on Kohlberg's work, Simpson points out that (a) Kohlberg collapses the often-noted science-description/ethics-prescription distinction, (b) that the approach is not universal and content irrelevant but restricted by its typically Western morality, and (c) that Kohlberg's developmental research reflects a doctrine of social evolutionism, ethnocentrism, and cultural bias. Simpson cites a number of Kohlberg's published statements to lend support to her indictments. These include Kohlberg's recommendation to individuals learning to score responses to his scale that they read Frankena's (1963) book on ethics; his observation that members of preliterate societies will not be able to score better than Stage 3 in his schema; his frequent use of "ought" and "should" in a nonpredictive, prescriptive sense; and his acceptance of a framework that apparently indicates, because of its structure, that females are less morally mature than males. Examples of Kohlberg's more revealing statements, drawn from his paper entitled "From is to ought: How to commit the Naturalistic Fallacy and get away with it in the study of moral development" (1971), include:

> There is a universal set of moral principles held by men in various cultures, our stage 6. (These principles, we shall argue, could logically and consistently be held by all men in all societies; they would in fact be universal in all mankind if the conditions for socio-moral development were optimal for all individuals in all cultures.) At lower levels than stage 5 or 6, morality is not held in a fully principled form. (p. 173)

> This [his research on moral development] suggests that relativism, like much of philosophy, is the disease of which it is the cure; the very questioning of the arbitrariness of conventional morality presupposes a dim intuition of non-arbitrary moral principles. (p. 180)
>
> Our psychological theory as to why moral development is upward and sequential is broadly the same as our philosophical justification for claiming that a higher stage is more moral than a lower stage. (pp. 180-181)
>
> These assumptions of our psychological theory correspond to parallel metaethical assumptions of a moral theory, that is, to assumptions as to the basic nature and validity of moral judgment. (p. 184)
>
> Our claims for superiority for higher stages are not claims for a system of grading the moral worth of individual persons, but are claims for the greater adequacy of one form of moral thinking over another. (p. 214)
>
> Three primary modes of moral judgment, and the corresponding types of ethical theory, deal with (a) duties and rights (deontological), (b) ultimate aims or ends (teleological), and (c) personal worth and virtue (theory of approbation). Our claims for the superiority, then, are claims for the superiority of stage 6 judgments of duties and rights (or of justice) over other systems of judgments of duties and rights. (p. 214)

Kohlberg thus admits that his model of moral development is prescriptive, that it ranks one kind of morality over other kinds of morality. However, he feels that he is justified in his claims since they are based on empirical evidence attesting to the invariance of his stages and their trans-cultural universality. However, detailed reviews of research investigating these assumptions (e.g., Graham, 1972; Kurtines & Grief, 1974; Simpson, 1974) agree that no conclusive decisions can be reached on the basis of the present findings. Secondly, his claim that "metaethical assumptions must be compatible with, if not derived from, acceptable psychological theorizing on moral judgment" (1971, p. 184) would be rejected by many ethical philosophers (cf. Alston,

1971; Peters, 1971). It does not logically follow that simply because a certain kind of action is judged ethical such an action should be judged ethical. As R. S. Peters (1971, p. 262) notes, this assumption "would involve us in the most feeble form of the naturalistic fallacy" since "nothing about what ought to be done follows from the empirical fact we use a word in a certain way." Lastly, although Kohlberg (1971, p. 217) argues that his deontological Stage 6 morality is a more moral mode of judgment by "formalist metaethical criteria," concensus has never been reached among ethical philosophers concerning what these metaethical criteria are, let alone that Kohlberg's approach meets the criteria better than other approaches to ethics.

Measurement issues. Many of the methodological problems encountered by Piaget and Kohlberg stem from their use of an open-ended, semi-structured interview technique for generating their basic stages of moral development. Although claims are made for invariance and universality of sequence, it is possible that the stages are largely determined by the idiosyncrasies of the population used in the initial interviews. For example, because Piaget focused on children's moral judgments, he suggests that moral maturity is reached by the age of 10 when the child moves into the autonomous stage. However, Kohlberg interviewed respondents over a greater age range and argues that many adults never become completely morally mature. Thus, while Kohlberg's classificatory scheme is more meaningful when measuring adults' judgmental processes, both approaches suffer from generalizability problems. From Kohlberg (1959, p. 89), "The number of types we came out with was eventually rather arbitrary, and undoubtedly determined by the limits of variation of our particular population."

A second set of difficulties revolves around problems of measuring stage attainment. Only Kohlberg has attempted to systematically develop a psychometrically acceptable technique in his Moral Judgment Scale (MJS). The scale, which follows an interview format, involves presenting a series of short stories describing moral dilemmas to respondents. The dilemmas are "ones in which acts of obedience to legal-social rules or to commands of authority conflict with the human needs of welfare of other individuals" (Kohlberg, 1964, p. 12). Interviewees are asked to evaluate the actions of the central person in the narrative, and to give the reasons for their particular evaluation. An example of one such dilemma (Kohlberg, 1964, pp. 18-19) follows:

> In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1000, which was half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desparate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should the husband have done that?

As originally designed (Kohlberg, 1959), an interviewer was to classify the 50 to 150 moral expostulations of the interviewee as representative of one of the 180 cells (30 dimensions of morality by six possible stages) of the classification system. The results could then be summarized in terms of a "global" score of moral development or by a "profile" analysis which reports the number of responses at each stage.

As a semi-structured interview technique, the MJS is open to criticisms of interviewer biases and effects, verbal ability confounds,

respondent biases such as test-taking sets, and potential subjectivity in scoring problems. Although few studies have directly examined the test-retest reliability of the MJS, several indirect measures suggest that it is low (e.g., Turiel, 1966; Rest et al., 1974), and Kurtines and Grief (1974) complain that the internal consistency of the stories has never been examined. Also, while those studies that have reported interviewer reliabilities suggest that it reaches acceptable levels (.78 to .85), the constant revision of scoring procedures by Kohlberg means that studies separated by several years may not be using comparable scoring procedures.

Several different steps have been taken to circumvent these problems. One method involves asking subjects to give written responses to Kohlberg's dilemmas without suggestions from an interviewer (e.g., Froming & Cooper, in press; Porter & Taylor, Note 1; Wilmoth & McFarland, Note 2). These responses can then be classified by several raters and the inter-rater reliability estimates obtained.

Alternatively, several researchers have attempted to develop objective measures of Kohlberg's six stages. Rest and his collegues (Rest, 1973; Rest et al., 1969; Rest et al., 1974) have subjects indicate a preference for (Rest et al., 1969) or the importance of (Rest, 1973; Rest et al., 1974) statements representative of Kohlberg's stages. Rest's Defining Issues Test (DIT) asks respondents to read six moral dilemmas, each of which is followed by 12 statements relevant to the situation. These statements were written so that they (a) contain the distinguishing features of Stages 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, (b) are short and to the main point, and (c) are matched as to syntax, length, and

vocabulary complexity. For example, after the Heinz and the drug dilemma, items recommended for consideration included "Whether or not a community's laws are going to be upheld," "Isn't it only natural for a loving husband to care so much for his wife that he'd steal?" or "What values are going to be the basis for governing human interactions?" (pp. 493-494). Subjects are requested to both rank each item as to its importance as well as select and rank the four most important statements "in deciding what ought to be done" (p. 494).

Rest's DIT successfully deals with certain psychometric and methodological problems inherent in Kohlberg's measurement technique and has been supported by some validation (Rest, Note 3). Rest recommends the use of the P score measure of the DIT, which is the sum of a subject's responses to those items indicative of principled morality (Stages 5 & 6). Since the many alternative methods of examining DIT responses apparently yield similar results (cf. Cooper, 1972; Rest et al., 1974), the P score is considered the central index of responses to the DIT; high P scores indicate a strong reliance on principles in making moral judgments, and low scores suggesting the adoption of lower level, conventional moral thought. In the initial assessment of the adequacy of the measure, Rest et al. (1974) did find developmental trends such that levels 2, 3, and 4 decrease with age while P scores increase, a significant correlation of + .68 between P and Kohlberg's moral judgment scale (global scoring method), and significant relationships between P and several value content scales (Law and Order scale, negative correlation; Libertarian Democracy Scale, positive correlation; Comprehension of social-moral concepts scale, positive correlation).

Unfortunately, Rests' work is open to several criticisms. Rest's model of morality, like that of Kohlberg's, relies on the comparison and evaluation of responses dependent upon a culture-specific content. For example, graduate students tested included seminarians and doctoral students in political science and moral philosophy. Rest et al. (1974, p. 495) note that "the latter group is probably the best estimate of expert opinion," without clarifying what moral philosophy students are expert at. Also, Rest fails to adequately interpret the theoretical meaning of the P-score. Since the stages of Kohlberg's sequence are qualitatively distinct and discontinuous, the interpretation of the "moral maturity" index is ambiguous since it lumps together theoretically different types of responses. Lastly, although Rest et al. report substantial correlations between the DIT and the MJS, Froming (personal communication) has found that this correlation is greatly reduced when age of respondent is controlled.

Psychological Processes and Philosophical Theory

The philosophical study of ethics addresses the issues which underly moral decision making. Moral philosophy recognizes that individuals do, should, and must make moral judgments of the type "Person X or action Y is not good." The basic question of "Why is X or Y seen as 'bad' rather than 'good'?" necessarily involves answering further questions such as "What are the meanings of ethical terms like 'good,' 'bad,' 'right,' and 'wrong'?;" "Do good actions share some common characteristics which determine the application of this label -- a set of characteristics which do not apply to bad actions?"; and "What are the reasons which support the assumption that the possession of these characteristics makes a thing 'good' rather than 'bad'?"

The relevance of moral philosophy to a psychological analysis of moral judgment must be clearly delineated in order to avoid the problem of confusing the two disciplines. A great deal of moral philosophy is concerned with making prescriptive statements concerning how actions and individuals should be morally evaluated, and thus how people should make moral judgments. A psychological analysis, on the other hand, performs only a descriptive function by proposing and testing a theoretical formulation of how individuals do make moral judgments. Thus, philosophy addresses the question of what actions are moral and which immoral, while a scientific theory is concerned with how individuals make psychological judgments about morality.

However, stating that science is descriptive while moral philosophy is prescriptive is to oversimplify. Science and ethics may be integrally related when decisions concerning what actions should be taken are made. For example, a political policy may be adopted based on the moral principle that human rights are sacred and should not be violated by any government. When this principle is accepted as the basis for action, information regarding how inequities may best be reduced is required. Scientific procedures then become useful in determining if the means proposed as solutions to the problem are viable, what the short and long term implications of implementing certain programs will be, and the psychological, political, sociological, and economic reactions which may accompany the implementation of the programs (Schlenker & Forsyth, 1977).

In addition, examination of the distinctions which ethical philosophers consider important may provide insight into possible individual differences in the moral judgment processes of non-philosophers.

For example, the disagreement between philosophers about whether or not benevolent motives justify actions which produce negative consequences may be evident at the psychological level as well; certain judges may feel that motives are more important than consequences, while others may feel that consequences are the primary data for moral judgments.

The Ethics of Aesthetics and Utility

The possibility that philosophical issues parallel psychological processes was explored by Sharp (1898) in one of the earliest studies of individual differences in moral judgment. Puzzled by the marked lack of concensus that typifies philosophical treatments of moral deliberation, he suggested that "the great majority of moralists have been and are either hopelessly incompetent or careless or both, or that there exist different types of moral judgment" (p. 198). Sharp distributed to people (who had not done "any study of theoretical ethics," p. 210) ten short moral dilemmas. All the vignettes contained information about the circumstances surrounding an action which produced a morally evaluable outcome, and ranged from choice of a career to stealing to allowing another person to die. For example, one situation (Situation V, p. 202) was:

> The following might have happened at the Johnstown (Penn.) flood. A man found he had just time either to warn his wife or two other women (not relatives). Both these women have family ties, etc. so that looked upon purely from an objective standpoint the death of anyone will involve as great a loss to all concerned as the death of another.

After describing the central character's decision, Sharp asked subject to make moral judgments about the depicted actions and explain the

reasoning underlying these judgments. Although the judgments made were, on the average, evenly split between praise and blame, Sharp concludes that the reasons subjects gave for their responses revealed three types of moral ideologies. The first type, referred to as the aesthetic judges, identifies moral worth with the "beauty of character" or motive revealed by action. The second type suggests a utilitarian emphasis on consequences. Members of the final group, who "were not the least numerous, alternated in the use of each, employing now one, now another, or both concurrently" (p. 222). Some examples of responses to Situation V included:

> He should save his wife -- he had promised sacredly to protect her. To the other women he did not owe this moral obligation. (p. 231)

> If he knew hundreds of people were to be swept away and drowned, without time enough to warn both of the parties, I should say it was his duty to save his wife. (p. 208)

> To warn the two women. Same principle as [I described] above, the greatest good to the greatest number, and least sum of suffering. Warning his wife would bring more satisfaction to himself, and less to others, but it would be selfish. He is supposed to look upon all as on a plane of common humanity, not as separated by artificial ties. (p. 232)

> All other things being equal, the number of lives he was able to save determines what is the proper impulse to follow, and not his personal relation to the persons in danger. But I would not condemn a man for saving his wife in preference to two other women, and I doubt if anyone else would condemn him. The numbers in this case are too nearly equal, though of course the fundamental principle is the same. (p. 208)

> Question of duty to your wife or to two persons not at all connected with you; of the death of one or two persons. I presume, looking at it from the good to the world and ignoring self, one should save two lives rather than one, but the other being his wife I should say save the wife. A man owes his first duty to his family, after that to the world. (p. 233)

Sharp concludes that "some value conduct primarily for what it brings, others for what it reveals," and that both approaches may be "taken towards the facts of the world of matter and consciousness, and we may accordingly ask whether they appear as determining factors in our judgments of right and wrong" (p. 222).

The Ethics of Idealism and Rule-Universalism

In a more recent study, Schlenker and Forsyth (1977) had subjects complete an "Ethical Position Questionnaire" which was comprised of items tapping the major concerns of adherents to various ethical philosophies; the specific focus of the items was the topic of psychological research. In order to empirically group the items from the questionnaire into coherent categories, subjects' responses were factor analyzed, revealing two strong bi-polar factors. The first, which Schlenker and Forsyth labelled idealism, included items relevant to the benefits and costs of research. Subjects whose factor scores classified them as idealists insisted that no harm, however small, was permissible in research, that people's welfare was crucial, and that it was of primary importance that a project might advance science. At the opposite end of the continuum were the pragmatists, who felt that some degree of harm was permissible and that it was not of primary importance for a scientific advance to follow from all research; a balancing of benefits and costs seemed paramount for these persons.

The second factor was labeled rule-universalism since it contained items pertinent to the degree subjects felt that universal, relatively rigid ethical codes could be developed. Some of the items with which

subjects could agree or disagree included "The application of a particular code of ethics depends entirely upon the particular study; what is approprite in one study might be totally inappropriate in another," "Any code of research ethics should serve only as a series of flexible rules and should not be expected to apply in any and all situations," and "What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another." High rule-universalism appears indicative of an ethical ideology which espouses the importance of principles in making moral judgments, while low rule-universalism is indicative of a relativistic ethical ideology.

When dichotamized, the idealism factor yields the two groups idealism and pragmatism, while absolutism and relativism correspond to the end-points of the rule-universalism continuum. By crossing the two dimensions, Schlenker and Forsyth were able to generate the four group, two-way classification of ethical ideologies pictured in Figure 2-1. The four ethical types which comprise the taxonomy include idealistic-absolutism, idealistic-relativism, pragmatic-absolutism, and pragmatic-relativism. As Schlenker and Forsyth point out, each of these ideologies is related to schools of thought in the philosophical study of ethics. The statements which subjects labeled idealistic-absolutists agreed with are consistent with a general approach to moral philosophy known as deontology. This ethical philosophy rejects a rule or action's consequences as a basis for moral evaluation and appeals to natural law and/or rationality to determine ethical judgments. In a deontological ethical philosophy, acts are to be judged as moral or immoral through their comparison with some universal moral rule to which no exceptions can be made. The philosopher Immanuel Kant, generally regarded as the

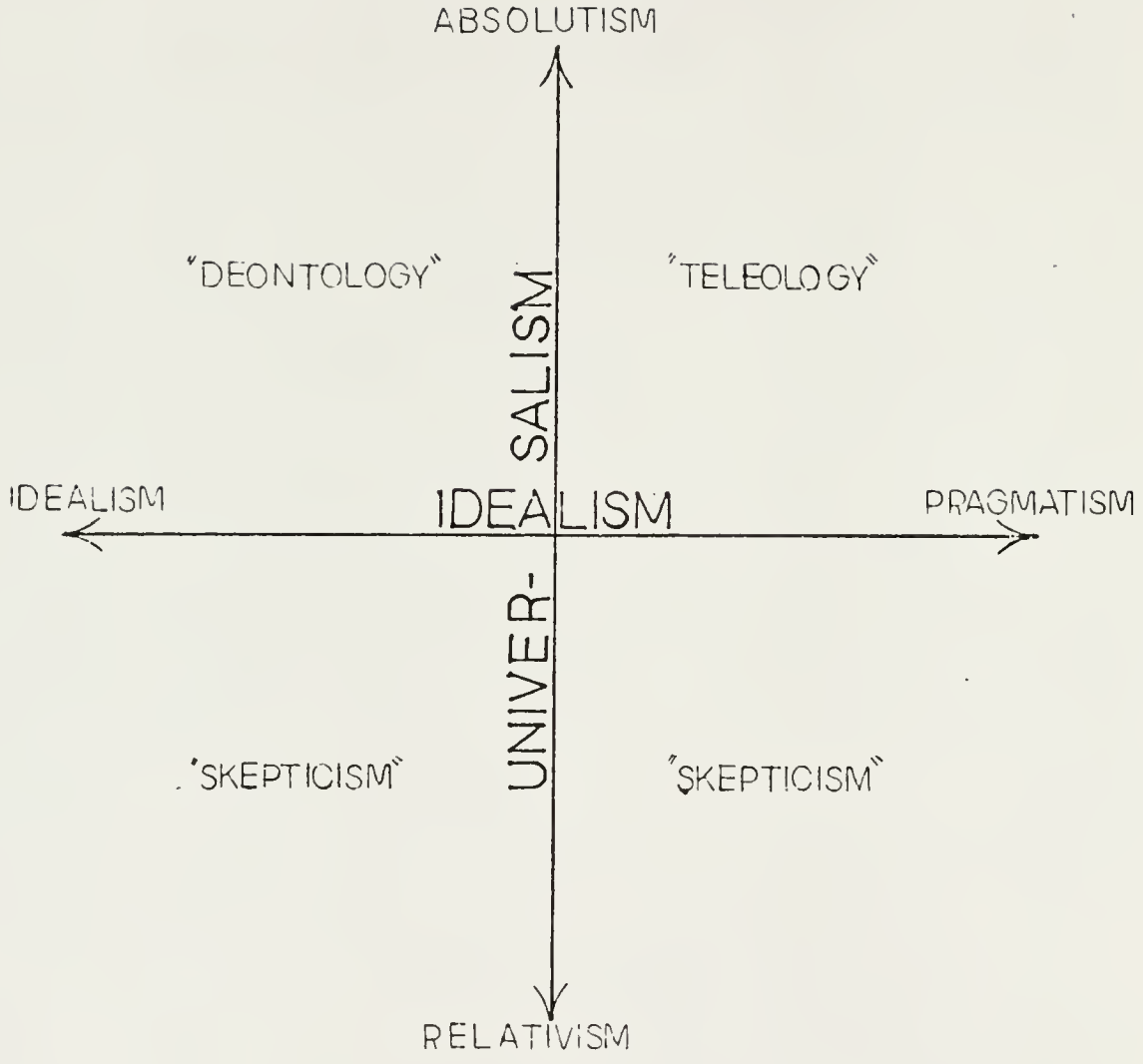

Figure 2-1

The Taxonomy of Ethical Ideologies

foremost proponent of the deontological school, prescribed that one must "Act only on that maxim which you can at the same time will to be a universal law" (cited in Frankena, 1973, p. 30). For Kant, this general universal principle or "categorical imperative would be that which represented an action as necessary of itself without reference to another end" (Kant, 1873/1973, p. 75). Applied to interpersonal conduct, Kant (p. 82) deduces that one must "act to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only."

Deontologically, a moral principle can allow no exceptions, regardless of the consequences. For example, suppose that a physician finds himself tempted to lie to a terminally ill patient about his chances for recovery. A deontological outlook would judge the lie, despite its benevolent goals, as immoral. While the lie may have ennumerable positive consequences for relatives, the doctor, and the patient, it "is an infringment on the rights of humanity" (Kant, 1962, p. 264). For the dontologist, "A lie is a lie, and is in itself intrinsically base whether it be told with good or bad intent" (Kant, 1962, p. 265). Although no ethical ideology adopted by an individual may possess all the characteristics of a purely deontological approach, the idealistic-absolutists emphasis on maintaining consistency with moral principles in order to obtain desired goals is similar to a deontological philosophy.

The statements endorsed by pragmatic-absolutists, on the other hand, are more compatible with a teleological ethical philosophy. The teleological approach proposes that the ultimate judgment of the morality of an action or set of actions depends upon the consequences produced by

it. One is ethically bound to act in a way that produces "good" consequences, with good being variously defined in terms of pleasure, happiness, self-realization, fulfillment, and/or demand. The position has a long history and Bentham's dictum, that action should produce the greatest good for the greatest number, epitomizes the approach.

Although the utilitarian formulation is relatively simple when all the consequences are good or all bad, it becomes more complicated when good and bad consequences are produced by a single action. When applied to the example of a doctor deciding whether to lie to an ill patient, the teleological philosopher advises that the potential benefits of the lie must be weighed against the potential costs of the lie. The doctor must calculate the benefit/cost ratio, taking into account positive factors (such as reducing the anxiety of the patient and family, aiding the patient's recovery by lessening his worry, and sparing himself the discomfort of telling someone they are going to die) and negative factors (such as arousing distrust in doctors if the lie is found out, actually reducing the patient's chance of recovery by hiding the seriousness of his condition from him, and complicating legal procedures such as preparation of the will). Thus, while the judgmental processes and behaviors of individuals classified as pragmatic-absolutists may not be consistent with a teleological philosophy, the items endorsed by this group did parallel a teleological approach to ethics. Like utilitarian philosophers, these "naive teleologists" suggest that absolute moral principles are important, but also agree that one must apply these rules pragmatically.

Lastly, all relativists endorse an ideology which is related to skepticism, although they may be either pragmatic or idealistic in their

orientation. At the philosophical level, a skeptical ethical ideology recognizes that there are many moral points of view, and all the varieties of skepticism seek in one way or another to criticize those who attempt to present specific ethical principles. Ethical egoism is an example of a skeptical ethical philosophy that takes a pragmatic approach to evaluating action. The ethical egoist argues that no moral standards are valid except in reference to one's own behavior. The only moral pronouncement that can be made is that one should act according to what one feels is right, and not act in a way that one feels is wrong. When universally applied, the pronouncement becomes "Everyone should always act so as to promote his own interest," a position adopted by Hobbes as an enlightened egoist (Davis, 1973). At one level, ethical egoism is similar to teleology since egoists typically allow consequences to serve as the basis for determining right and wrong. Egoists, however, avoid the problem of transpersonal agreement in judgments since only their own value judgments are crucial. Also, egoists stand in direct opposition to utilitarians for they consider behaviors in light of the greatest goodness to themselves rather than to others.

Fletcher's situation ethics (1966) provides an example of an idealistic skepticism. While endorsing neither strict principledness nor anarchy, Fletcher argues that morality should attempt to focus on "a contextual appropriateness -- not the "good" or the "right" but the fitting" (1973, p. 186). Fletcher idealistically suggests that this will be possible if one's actions are based on agapé, or love of others. Like these skeptical approaches to moral philosophy, the relativistic ideology reveals a distrust in absolute moral principles, and argues instead that each situation must be examined individually.

Although the comparison of each ethical ideology with a philosophical counterpart does much to clarify the nature of each position, the distinction between a philosophical analysis of a moral issue and a psychological analysis of an individual's ethical ideology should not be overlooked. Kant, as a deontologist, argued that actions are judged by assessing their compatibility with moral standards. The idealistic-absolutist, as a psychological "deontologist," also argues that moral standards are important determinants of moral judgments. However, the link between the "true" deontology of Kant and a psychological "deontologist," is not perfect. For example, idealistic absolutists, while they argue that principles and not consequences provide the basis of morality, may never-the-less base their moral judgments on the consequences of an action as well as on its normativeness. Thus, while it is heuristic to note the parallels between deontology and idealistic-absolutism, teleology and pragmatic-absolutism, and relativism and skepticism, the comparison does not suggest that the psychological ideologies do not differ from the corresponding moral philosophies.

Ethical ideology and moral judgment. In addition to empirically distinguishing individuals who endorsed different ethical ideologies, Schlenker and Forsyth's results also provided some indication of the relationship between ethical stance and moral judgment. Subjects in the study read a description of a psychology experiment in which deception was employed, and rated the described study as to scientific value, amount learned, degree of harm produced, and ethicality. The results indicated that for pragmatists who endorse absolute principles (teleologists), estimation of ethicality was positively correlated with perceptions of benefits such as amount of information learned and the

experimenter's concern for science, but uncorrelated with cost considerations such as amount of harm done subjects, predictions of possible harm, and the foreseeability of harm. For the idealistic-absolutists ("deontologists"), moral judgments were negatively correlated with judgments related to the harm done subjects, while positive considerations were uncorrelated with judgments of morality. Thus, subjects' moral judgments did not perfectly reflect the philosophical ideology they espoused. One possible source of the differences in perspective between the two ideologies may lie in how idealistic their expectations are. As regards psychological research, a subject classified as an idealistic-absolutist, although interested in the advancement of science, also believes that the advancement may come about without any negative ramifications such as harming participants in research projects. Therefore, irrespective of the positive attributes of the research, he or she may condemn the action since it falls below his or her idealistic standards. The pragmatic-absolutist, on the other hand, pragmatically assumes that some negative consequences will unavoidably result from any psychological research project, so that the essence of ethicality is perceived to lie in the positive consequences which offset the ubiquitous but insignificant negative consequences. Interestingly, the group whose moral judgments most completely covaried with both benefits and costs were the idealists who believed in non-universal, fluid rules (i.e., the relativists). Thus, Schlenker and Forsyth, using their Ethical Positions Questionnaire as a measure of moral ideology, found support for (a) the existence of variation in individuals' ethical ideologies and (b) that these variations influence moral evaluations.

Applications and Limitations of the Ethical Ideology Approach

The problem of cultural bias and value judgment encountered in dealing with Kohlberg's theorizing is avoided by Schlenker and Forsyth. Given Kohlberg's emphasis on the importance of principled morality, his typology must necessarily downgrade the reasoning underlying the maturity of individuals who do not rely on deontological principles in their moral judgments. A typology based on the Ethics Positions Questionnaire measurement of idealism/rule-universalism does not "rank" any morality as more mature than another, and recognizes individuals who are skeptical about the existence of universal laws. Given the value-ladenness of moral judgment, extra care seems to be required when attempting to examine its processes scientifically. The distinction between philosophy and science is an important one since it determines how questions are to be answered (i.e., either empirically or through philosophically acceptable means), and the Schlenker and Forsyth classification does not meld the two. In addition, the approach is consistent with other recent research which suggests that certain individuals may be "naive" philosophical relativists. For example, Hogan (1970, 1973) argues that certain individuals' moral judgments are less closely related to the compatibility of an action with moral standards. He argues for the existence of persons who follow an "ethics of personal conscience" who tend to be "innovative and form creating" but may also be opportunistic and impulsive. Hogan contrasts these individuals with those who follow the "ethics of responsibility." These individuals are characterized by conventionality in their moral judgments, tending to be reasonable, dependable, and emphasizing currently

accepted laws and political institutions. Hogan's (1973, p. 225) Survey of Ethical Attitudes (SEA) measures these two philosophies of "responsibility" and "personal conscience" by asking individuals if they agree or disagree with such statements as "(a) All civil laws should be judged against a higher moral law; (b) right and wrong can be meaningfully defined only by the law; (c) an unjust law should not be obeyed; (d) without law the life of man would be nasty, brutish, and short."

The idealism/rule-universalism typology is not without its limitations, however. The items used to construct the two subscales of idealism and rule universalism were selected empirically via factor analysis. Thus, the questionnaire contained other items in addition to those later selected for the scales, and these items could have influenced subjects' scores. In addition, all the questions used by Schlenker and Forsyth for the classification of individuals were in reference to psychological experimentation. Although there is no inherent problem with this emphasis since Schlenker and Forsyth were primarily interested in individuals' judgments of the psychological experiment, their items cannot necessarily be applied to judgments of other situations and the categories suggested may be relevant only when people judge psychological experiments.

A second problem revolves around the issue of the characteristics of the individuals who endorse different ethical ideologies. While the consistency between the four ethical ideologies reported and the approaches to ethics actually taken by philosophers supports the generality of the typology, further clarification of the differences between judges who endorse the various ideologies is needed to determine the impact of

ideology on moral attribution. For example, the manner in which individuals in different groups differ in their actual moral judgments has not been examined. The finding that idealistic-absolutists emphasized negative consequences more than pragmatic-absolutists should mean that the latter group is more positive in their moral judgment of an action that produces mixed consequences. However, an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of members of the ideologies suggested by Schlenker and Forsyth has not yet been conducted.

CHAPTER THREE

SCALE DEVELOPMENT, HYPOTHESES, AND METHODS

While attribution theory hypothesizes that both responsibility ascriptions and action evaluation are determinants of moral judgments, research suggests that individual differences in ethical ideology may systematically influence such attributions as well. Adopting the classificatory framework explored by Schlenker and Forsyth (1977), the attributor's idealism and belief in the universality of moral rules should impact on attribution of morality. To provide an example, suppose that two individuals witnessing an action that produces positive and negative consequences both apply universal rules in making their moral judgments; however, the first attributor is idealistic, while the second is pragmatic. The second individual, since he or she emphasizes the positive consequences of the action more than the negative, may evaluate the act itself more positively. The idealistic individual's appraisal, on the other hand, would be less positive because of the greater salience of the negative consequences. Further, the idealistic individual may also be more likely to hold the actor responsible for the negative consequences since he or she assumes that bad outcomes are ultimately avoidable.

This chapter describes the hypotheses and methods which were used to investigate the impact of ethical ideology on the attribution of morality. Because the original Ethics Position Questionnaire used by

Schlenker and Forsyth was specific to judgments of psychological experiments, a revised version of the EPQ was developed which was applicable to all interpersonal encounters which involve moral decisions. After a description of the steps which were taken in this scale development process, the hypotheses which guided the research are presented. The chapter concludes with a description of the methods which were followed in the three validational studies which investigated how an actor's degree of responsibility, the quality of the consequences, and the consistency of the action with norms of morality influence moral attributions.

Scale Development

The Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ1) developed by Schlenker and Forsyth (1977) was originally comprised of 68 items which dealt with various issues relevant to the morality of psychological research. The items were selected as indicants of the major issues which characterize discussions of moral judgments and "ran the gamut from ones concerned with the feasibility of universal ethical codes to ones concerned with deception, harm to research participants, and the ability of science to solve the world's problems" (p. 382). The EPQ1 was administered to 180 male and female college students, who responded by noting degree of agreement or importance on seven and 9-point scales. From this total group of statements the 27 items contained in Appendix A were selected via a principle axes factor analysis with varimax rotations as indicative of the two dimentions of ethical ideology; 13 for the rule universalism factor (absolutism-relativism) and 14 for the idealism factor (idealism-pragmatism).

A revision of the scale was carried out in order to produce a measurement device that would possess the following characteristics: (1) applicability to all interpersonal encounters rather than just psychology experiments, (2) high inter-item consistency on each subscale but broad representativeness of the desired dimensions, (3) stability over time, (4) orthogonality between the two subscales, and (5) little or no relationship between the two scales and social desirability indicators. As with the EPQ1, the scale would enable the classification of individuals according to ethical ideology, including idealistic-absolutists ("deontologists"), pragmatic-absolutists ("teleologists"), idealistic-relativists ("idealistic skeptics") and pragmatic-relativists ("pragmatic skeptics").

Step One: Initial Factor and Item Analysis

The first step taken in revising the EPQ1 involved generating a large number of items which were subjectively judged to be indicants of the two dimensions of ethical ideology. These 120 items included some used in the EPQ1 but reworded to be less content specific, and new items which seemed to reflect either universalism or idealism. On the basis of face validity and relevance to the two dimensions, 55 items were selected for further use. The 26 questions concerned with idealism and 29 items related to rule-universalism are contained in Appendix A.

As part of the initial scaling procedure 65 students from the Introductory Psychology subject pool were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each item on 9-point Likert-type scales. A total score for both idealism and rule-universalism was then computed, and

correlated with each individual item. These correlations (see Appendix A) were used to provide a basis for a scale construction process designed to create two subscales with adequate length and internal consistency. An item was incorporated into the scale if the correlation between it and the relevant subscale was high and the correlation between the item and the second subscale was low.

Although high internal consistency was desired, it was also important that the items retained in the final EPQ tapped all the relevant domains of content. Therefore, factor analysis was used in conjunction with item analysis to insure that the scales did not yield a restricted range of applicability. Using principle components factoring and orthogonal varimax rotation, 16 factors were extracted which had eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1.0. These factors accounted for 77.0% of the total variance and are described in Table 3-1. Using this factor analysis, groups of items were selected for scaling which sampled from as many of the different factors as possible to insure generality of the final scale.

The items retained after the preliminary scaling can be seen in Appendix A. Based on both the item and factor analysis, 14 items were selected for the idealism scale and 13 for the rule-universalism scale. An item was retained provided (a) the correlation between it and the relevant scale was high, (b) the correlation between it and the second subscale was low, and (c) the item was representative of one of the domains of content suggested by the factor analysis. Scaling also uncovered the importance of a third group of items. These items all measured the degree to which the individual was willing to make moral

Table 3-1

Summary of the Factor Analysis of the Initial Set of Items Used in Generating the Revised EPQ

Factor	Eigenvalue	% Variance	Identifying Items			
One	7.63	13.9	Item 10 (.43)	31 (.56)	33 (.57)	34 (.86)
			35 (.59)	36 (.79)		
Two	5.88	10.7	Item 3 (.45)	16 (.85)	30 (.75)	32 (.77)
			43 (.60)	43 (.44)		
Three	3.91	7.1	Item 1 (.91)	2 (.48)	3 (.45)	13 (.61)
			14 (.49)	46 (.44)	47 (.55)	
Four	3.43	6.2	Item 22 (.62)	23 (.73)	24 (.59)	
Five	3.05	5.5	Item 44 (.43)	49 (.79)		
Six	2.62	4.8	Item 7 (-.43)	8 (.74)	27 (.66)	
Seven	2.22	4.0	Item 37 (.72)	38 (.64)	44 (.47)	45 (.66)
Eight	2.19	4.0	Item 20 (.60)	28 (.49)	29 (.43)	39 (-.66)
			40 (.86)			
Nine	1.85	3.4	Item 6 (.67)			
Ten	1.81	3.3	Item 21 (-.72)	47 (.51)		
Eleven	1.56	2.8	Item 9 (.49)	12 (-.78)	19 (.44)	

Table 3-1 (continued)

Factor	Eigenvalue	% Variance	Identifying Items			
Twelve	1.48	2.7	Item 33 (.42)	43 (.63)	52 (.81)	53 (.74)
Thirteen	1.32	2.4	Item 4 (.60)	5 (.65)	15 (.49)	
Fourteen	1.18	2.1	Item 26 (.68)			
Fifteen	1.17	2.1	Item 11 (.50) 51 (.41)	14 (.46)	18 (.48)	25 (.57)
Sixteen	1.04	1.9	Item 3 (.43)	22 (.41)		

Note: Item numbers refer to the ennumeration used in Appendix A (Part 1). Factor loadings are given in parentheses.

judgments of others, and contained the items "Others actions should not be judged," "Although I use my moral principles to judge my own actions, I don't use my principles in making judgments of others," and "I would not condemn another who performs an action which violates one of my moral rules if the doer thinks that he is acting morally." Because these three items were highly intercorrelated but did not seem to be theoretically or empirically related to either idealism or rule-universalism, they were used to construct a separate scale which measured willingness to generalize one's moral ideology to others.

Step Two: Final Revision of the EPQ

These two preliminary items were then completed by 56 students from the Introductory Psychology subject pool, along with Edward's (1957) SDS -- the Social Desirability Scale. First, additional item analysis was conducted to delete any items which did not correlate significantly ($p < .01$) with the totals for each scale. This analysis resulted in the retention of 10 items for the idealism scale, 10 for the rule-universalism scale, and 3 for the generality of judgments scale. These 23 items, along with the directions for the EPQ, are presented in Table 3-2. Next, the inter-scale correlations were computed to assess the orthogonality of the measures. The correlation between rule-universalism and idealism was + .05 (ns), and the correlations between these two scales and the generality scale were + .37 ($p < .05$) and + .23 (ns), respectively. Lastly, the correlation between each scale and the SDS was calculated. These correlations, for rule-universalism, idealism, and generality, were + .22, + .18, and + .26 (ns), respectively. These analyses suggest that, as desired, the two scalesof universalism and idealism were not

Table 3-2

The Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)

You will find a series of general statements listed below. Each represents a commonly held opinion and there are no right or wrong answers. You will probably disagree with some items and agree with others. We are interested in the extent to which you agree or disagree with such matters of opinion.

Please read each statement carefully. Then, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by placing on the line in front of the statement the number corresponding to your feelings where:

1 = Completely Disagree	4 = Slightly Disagree	7 = Moderately Agree
2 = Largely Disagree	5 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree	8 = Largely Agree
3 = Moderately Disagree	6 = Slightly Agree	9 = Completely Agree

First impressions are usually best in such matters. Read each statement carefully, decide if you agree or disagree and the strength of your opinion, and then enter the appropriate number on the answer sheet. PLEASE give your opinion on every statement.

* * *

_____ 1. A person should make certain that their actions never intentionally harm another, even to a small degree.

_____ 2. Risks to another should never be tolerated, irrespective of how small the risks might be.

_____ 3. The existence of potential harm to others is always wrong, irrespective of the benefits to be gained.

_____ 4. It is sometimes necessary to sacrifice the welfare of others in certain interpersonal situations.

_____ 5. One should never psychologically or physically harm another person.

_____ 6. One should not perform an action which might in any way threaten the dignity and welfare of another individual.

_____ 7. If an action could harm an innocent other, then it should not be done.

_____ 8. The compatibility of the action with ideas of what is the "best" or most "perfect" kind of behavior must be taken into account when judging actions.

_____ 9. Balancing the positive consequences against the negative consequences of an action can result in a person performing an action which will harm others to get positive consequences, and hence is immoral.

Table 3-2 (continued)

_____ 10. The dignity and welfare of people should be the most important concern in any society.

_____ 11. Other's actions should not be judged.

_____ 12. Although I use my moral principles to judge my own actions, I don't use my principles in making judgments of others.

_____ 13. I would not condemn another who performs an action which violates one of my moral rules if the doer of the act thinks that is acting morally.

_____ 14. What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another.

_____ 15. Moral standards should be seen as being individualistic; what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person.

_____ 16. Different types of moralities cannot be compared as to "rightness"; what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person.

_____ 17. Questions of what is a moral behavior can never be resolved since what is moral or immoral is up to the individual.

_____ 18. Moral standards are simply personal rules which indicate how a person should behave, and are not to be applied in making judgments of others.

_____ 19. Ethical considerations in interpersonal relations are so complex that individuals should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes.

_____ 20. Rigidly codifying an ethical position that prevents certain types of actions could stand in the way of better human relations and adjustment.

_____ 21. No rule concerning lying can be formulated; whether or not a lie is permissible or not permissible totally depends upon the situation.

_____ 22. There are some ethical principles that are so important that they should be a part of any code of ethics.

_____ 23. Whether or not a lie is judged to be moral or immoral depends upon the circumstances surrounding the action.

Note: The idealism score is computed by averaging responses to 1-10 (Item 4 is reverse scored).

Table 3-2 (continued)

The rule-universalism score is computed by averaging responses to 14-23 (Item 22 is reverse scored).

The generality score is computed by averaging responses to 11-13.

significantly correlated with one another. Also, while there was a small positive correlation between scales and SDS, it did not reach significance.

Step Three: Scale Characteristics

The EPQ, in its final form, was administered to 337 psychology students in their classrooms in order to (1) obtain information about the scale item (e.g., means, standard deviations, correlations with total scores) and (2) identify a set of respondents who would participate in the validational experiments. The 64 males and 64 females who were selected on the basis of this first administration completed the EPQ a second time -- approximately two weeks later in individual testing booths -- allowing for the calculation of test-retest reliabilities and comparison of internal consistency based on the first administration (in the classroom, n = 337) and the second administration (individual sessions, n = 128).

The characteristics of the Ethics Position Questionnaire are summarized in Tables 3-3 to 3-7. Table 3-3 contains the inter-item correlations, item-to-total correlations (corrected for the item iteself), item means, item standard deviations, and item test-retest reliabilities for the idealism scale. Tables 3-4 and 3-5 contain similar information for the remaining scales of rule-universalism and generality. Table 3-6 contains the statistics of reliability for both the first and second administrations of the EPQ. As previous analyses had indicated, the idealism and rule-universalism scales have high internal consistency as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha and Spearman-Brown criteria. Internal consistency was, however, greater for second administration responses in

comparison to the first administration responses. Although several factors could account for these results, this reduced consistency for first testing could possibly be due to carelessness on the part of subjects when they responded to the EPQ in the large group testing sessions. Alternatively, the change in the reliability of the instrument may be due to a practice effect that results in an increased coherence in the responses of subjects who have taken the EPQ previously.

Test-retest reliabilities for the three subscales were computed by correlating each subject's score for the first administration of the EPQ with his or her score on the second administration. These correlation coefficients are presented in Table 3-7, and while all are significant, they are only moderate in magnitude. Although this less-than-desired degree of test consistency across time may indicate that the dimensions being assessed are unstable, several other factors could have limited the size of the correlations. For example, variations in the administrative procedures and questionnaire formats used for the two assessments may have been influential; second, if subjects did respond less carefully on the first administration as the lowered internal consistency statistics suggest, this would also reduce the size of the test-retest correlation. Lastly, since these analyses are based on the responses of subjects with extreme scores on the idealism and rule-universalism scale, statistical regression towards the mean could have limited the size of the test-retest reliabilities.

The correlations between the second administration EPQ scales and the original ethics position measure (the EPQ1), the DIT, and the SEA are also presented in 3-7. Both idealism and rule-universalism correlated

Table 3-3

The Idealism-Pragmatism Scale: Inter-Item Correlations, Item-to-Total Correlations, Item Means, Item Standard Deviations, and Item Reliabilities

Item Number	Inter-Item Correlations										Correlation with Total (n = 337)	Item Mean	Item s.d.	Item Test-Retest Reliability
	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10				
Item 1	1.0										.57	7.42	1.68	.20*
Item 2	.43	1.0									.50	6.40	2.00	.24**
Item 3	.46	.60	1.0								.60	6.46	2.18	.18*
Item 4	.06	.11	.21	1.0							.17	4.53	2.32	.13
Item 5	.44	.20	.37	.17	1.0						.50	7.13	2.06	.63**
Item 6	.54	.36	.47	.13	.60	1.0					.61	7.06	1.92	.46**
Item 7	.33	.30	.32	.07	.29	.34	1.0				.44	7.69	1.54	.51**
Item 8	.14	.11	-.02	-.15	-.06	.01	.18	1.0			.07	6.64	1.75	.16
Item 9	.28	.26	.36	.11	.26	.34	.26	.14	1.0		.44	5.02	2.31	.46**
Item 10	.21	.14	.18	.14	.26	.23	.17	.12	.27	1.0	.33	7.16	1.82	.49**

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

Table 3-4

The Absolutism-Relativism Scale: Inter-Item Correlations, Item-to-Total Correlations, Item Means, Item Standard Deviations, and Item Reliabilities

	Inter-Item Correlations													
Item Number	Item 14	Item 15	Item 16	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20	Item 21	Item 22	Item 23	Correlation with Total (n = 337)	Item Mean	Item s.d.	Item Test-Retest Reliability
Item 14	1.0										.28**	7.86	1.62	.34**
Item 15	.35	1.0									.56**	7.02	2.14	.35**
Item 16	.34	.66	1.0								.62**	7.23	1.87	.17*
Item 17	.13	.51	.56	1.0							.60**	6.12	2.36	.36**
Item 18	.04	.28	.31	.45	1.0						.38**	4.99	2.37	.27**
Item 19	.09	.31	.27	.36	.35	1.0					.43**	5.58	2.16	.46**
Item 20	.12	.25	.35	.31	.20	.34	1.0				.39**	6.46	1.99	.33**
Item 21	.09	.19	.21	.24	.12	.21	.19	1.0			.40**	5.22	2.53	.41**
Item 22	.10	.07	.11	.18	.23	.12	.01	.03	1.0		.16	2.77	1.73	.05
Item 23	.20	.19	.23	.20	-.02	.12	.18	.65	-.02	1.0	.35**	6.09	2.40	.44**

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

Table 3-5

The Generality Scale: Inter-Item Correlations, Item-to-Total Correlations, Item Means, Item Standard Deviations, and Item Reliabilities

Item Number	Inter-Item Correlations			Correlation with Total	Item Mean	Item s.d.	Item Test-Retest Reliability
	Item 11	Item 12	Item 13				
Item 11	1.0			.33**	4.10	2.38	.29**
Item 12	.30	1.0		.35**	4.08	2.47	.18*
Item 13	.22	.24	1.0	.29**	5.68	2.40	.30**

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

Table 3-6

The Reliabilities of the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha	Spearman-Brown split-half
First Administration (n = 337)			
Idealism	10	.754	.713
Rule-universalism	10	.753	.637
Generality	3	.465	.465
Second Administration (n = 128)			
Idealism	10	.880	.865
Rule-universalism	10	.827	.710
Generality	3	.695	.698

Table 3-7

Summary of the Scale Characteristics of the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)

Scale[a]	Test-Retest	EPQ1 Idealism	EPQ1 Rule-universal	P-score	SEA	Interscale Correlations		
						Idealism	Rule-universalism	Generality
Idealism	.709*	.688*	-.266*	-.006	.139	1.0		
Rule-universalism	.689*	.062	.339*	.007	-.312*	-.087	1.0	
Generality	.271*	.233*	-.046	.223*	-.272*	.306*	.249*	1.0

*Significantly different from 0.0 at the $p = .05$ level or better (two-tailed).
[a]Second Administration Responses ($n = 128$).

significantly with the corresponding subscales included in the original EPQ, although the match was better for the idealism scale than for rule-universalism; the correlation between idealism-EPQI and idealism-EPQ was greater than the correlation between rule-universalism-EPI and rule-universalism-EPQ ($p < .05$). In addition, the generality subscale, which was not included in the EPQI, was found to correlate with the idealism subscale of the original EPQ, but was not related to the original rule-universalism subscale.

Rest's Defining Issues Test can be scored to yield an overall measure of moral maturity as well as a stage classification based on Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Rest, Note 4). The P-score, which Rest contends is best for correlational analyses (Rest, Note 4), summarizes the extent to which a subject's responses to the series of moral dilemmas display reasoning typical of stages five or six. Thus, the larger the P-score, the more morally principled or "morally mature" a subject. As Table 3-7 indicates, neither the idealism nor the rule-universal scales correlated significantly with P. However, generality of moral judgments was correlated positively with P, suggesting that moral maturity may be associated with the recognition that one's conclusions about morality may be applicable only to oneself.

The DIT was also used to classify subjects into their stages of moral development. Of the 128 subjects who participated, 39 (30.5%) could not be classified clearly, 12 (9.4%) were classified as Stage 3, 30 (23.4%) as Stage 4, 46 (33.9%) as Stage 5, and only 1 (.8%) as Stage 6. Analysis of the joint frequency distribution of the subjects based on the EPQ ethical stance classification and the DIT stage

classification to determine, for example, if more deontologists were also classified as Stage 4 or if skeptics were more likely to be classified at a higher stage of reasoning than teleologists. The analysis revealed no significant relation between the two measures; $\underline{X}^2$ (12) = 14.48, $\underline{p}$ = .30. It is of interest to note, however, that the one Stage 6 subject found in the sample was classified a deontologist.

According to Hogan (1973), individuals who receive high scores on the Survey of Ethical Attitudes (The SEA) adopt an ethics of social responsibility that emphasizes acceptance of societal regulatory standards, while low scorers rely on an ethics of personal conscience which argues that a society's standards can be violated if they conflict with "higher law." As the correlations in Table 3-7 indicate, idealism was unrelated to SEA, but both generality and rule-universality were negatively correlated with the measure. Thus, individuals who express a disbelief in the possibility of formulating universal standards of morality and a reluctance to generalize moral judgments to others also tend to adopt the ethics of personal conscience.

Hypotheses and Methods

Predictions

Three experiments were conducted examining the classificatory adequacy of the revised EPQ. All three experiments were similar in that subjects, who included idealistic-absolutists, idealistic-relativists, pragmatic-absolutists, and pragmatic-relativists, were asked to make moral attributions about the actors in particular situations which were described to them. The three experiments were designed and conducted at the same

time, and so they should not be interpreted as a sequence of studies. Although greater detail concerning the specific hypotheses under test will be provided in subsequent chapters, a general description of each of the studies and its focus follows.

Experiment I, "Consequences of Acts and the Attribution of Morality," examined how individuals who adopt different ethical ideologies differ in their emphasis of negative and positive consequences. Subjects read four scenarios describing a series of events which culminated in outcomes which were both good and bad. Respondents then made moral judgments about the actor who produced the mixed consequences, and also evaluated the quality of the different consequences. Based on Schlenker and Forsyth's results, it was predicted that idealistic-absolutists would emphasize the negative consequences more than the positive, that pragmatic-absolutists would emphasize the positive more than the negative, and that relativists would balance both positive and negative consequences. Because of this differential impact of the consequences on moral attribution, idealistic-absolutists were expected to be more severe in their moral attributions, pragmatic-absolutists least, and relativists would be intermediate.

Subjects in Experiment II, "Responsibility, Consequences and Moral Evaluations," read a series of twenty short scenarios which were developed by Shaw and his associates (e.g., Shaw, 1968; Shaw & Reitan, 1969; Shaw & Sulzer, 1964). In half of the stories, the outcome of the described action was extremely positive, while in the remaining half the outcome was extremely negative. In addition, elements within each scenario were varied so that each of Heider's five levels of responsibility was represented. Thus, the outcome which was described was either good

or bad, and the central character in the story was either associated with the outcome, caused the outcome, caused the foreseeable outcome unintentionally, intentionally produced the outcome, or justifiably produced the outcome.

After reading a story subjects were asked to make judgments about the morality and responsibility of the actor. Based on Shaw's work, it was predicted that greater amounts of responsibility would be attributed to the actor up through the level of intentionality, but that attribution of responsibility would decrease at the level of justification. In addition, the actor would be held more responsible for a negative outcome than a positive one. It was further hypothesized that the extent to which this increased attribution for negative consequences occurs would be dependent in part upon the ethical ideology of the attributor. Because an idealistic individual assumes that negative consequences can be avoided, these individuals should be more likely than pragmatists to hold the actor who produces negative consequences responsible. However, while this attributional assymetry should hold for both idealistic-absolutists and relativists in the attribution of responsibility, when subjects are attributing morality the severity of consequences effect should be pronounced only for idealistic-absolutists. Since idealistic-relativists are less likely to blame a person for violating moral expectations in any given situation, their attributions of morality will not be as directly dependent upon their attributions of responsibility.

Experiment III, "The Consistency of Action with Norms of Morality and Moral Judgments," was conducted to determine how individuals within

the different ethical ideologies are influenced by the consistency of an action with moral standards. Subjects who participated in this study read a series of sentences, each describing an action and outcome. The action was either consistent or inconsistent with a moral standard (e.g., lying vs. telling the truth, breaking a promise vs. keeping a promise), and the outcomes were extremely good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or extremely bad. Because idealistic-absolutists emphasize the importance of acting consistently with rigid rules of morality, it was expected that these attributors would be most influenced by the consistency of the action with a moral standard. Therefore it was hypothesized that idealistic-absolutists would be more negative in their judgments of an actor who violated a moral standard than pragmatic-absolutists and relativists, and that these differences would be most pronounced when the consequences associated with the violation were negative.

Subjects

Sixty-four males and 64 females recruited from the Introductory Psychology subject pool participated in the experiments. The data of one additional female participant were excluded from the analysis since she failed to follow the instructions. These 128 subjects were selected from a larger sample of 337 psychology students who were given the revised EPQ in their classrooms. Using these responses to the EPQ, the 64 highest and lowest scores on the rule-universalism and idealism subscales were identified, contacted, and asked to complete additional measures. When both ethical ideology and sex of subject are considered, the sampling selected subjects to fill the eight cells of the 2 (absolutistic vs.

relativistic) by 2 (idealistic vs. pragmatic) by 2 (males vs. females) factorial design.

Procedure

Subjects were scheduled to complete the experimental questionnaires and other personality measures individually. Upon arriving at the laboratory room, subjects were greeted by a male experimenter who seated them in individual testing booths which minimize distractions while completing the instruments. Subjects were then asked to read the instructions to the series of questionnaires and begin. The entire procedure took an average of 1 1/2 hours to complete, but times ranged from 1 to 3 1/2 hours.

For all subjects, the questionnaire booklet contained the following measures: the revised EPQ, the original EPQI from Schlenker and Forsyth, the Defining Issues Test (the DIT, Rest's measure of moral maturity described in Chapter Two), the Survey of Ethical Attitudes (the SEA, developed by Hogan to measure the ethics of conscience vs. legalism and also described in Chapter Two), and the scenarios and dependent measures for Experiment I. In addition, subjects' booklets also contained the materials for Experiment II or Experiment III. Thus, while 128 subjects participated in Experiment I, only half that number were given the materials for experiments II and III. The EPQ was the first measure in all the booklets since as unbiased an estimate of ethical stance as possible was desired, but the order of the remaining questionnaires was counterbalanced across subjects. The eight orderings of booklets employed were randomly determined, and all eight orders were used in each cell of the design. These orderings are described in Table 3-8.

Table 3-8

Random Orders of Materials

Order Number	Questionnaires					
1	EPQ	Experiment I	DIT	SEA	EPQ1	Experiment II-III
2	EPQ	DIT	SEA	EPQ1	Experiment I	Experiment II-III
3	EPQ	SEA	Experiment II-III	DIT	Experiment I	EPQ1
4	EPQ	Experiment II-III	SEA	Experiment I	EPQ1	DIT
5	EPQ	Experiment II-III	EPQ1	SEA	Experiment I	DIT
6	EPQ	Experiment I	EPQ1	SEA	Experiment II-III	DIT
7	EPQ	Experiment II-III	DIT	SEA	EPQ1	Experiment I
8	EPQ	SEA	Experiment II-III	Experiment I	DIT	EPQ1

CHAPTER FOUR

EXPERIMENT I: CONSEQUENCES OF ACTION AND THE ATTRIBUTION OF MORALITY

Schlenker and Forsyth (1977) found that individuals weigh the consequences of an action differently depending upon their ethical viewpoint. Idealistic-absolutists ("deontologists") tended to look to the negative consequences, pragmatic-absolutists ("teleologists") to the positive, and the moral judgments of relativists ("skeptics") covaried with both types of consequences. Thus, if asked to judge an action which produced both good and bad outcomes, pragmatic-absolutists' moral attributions should be more closely related to their evaluations of the quality of the positive consequences while idealistic-absolutists' attributions should be more closely related to their evaluations of the negative consequences. Relativists' attributions, on the other hand, should be related to evaluations of both the positive and negative consequences produced by the action. Because of this divergence in the emphasis of consequences, the three positions should also differ in the severity of their moral attributions. If idealistic-absolutists are indeed emphasizing negative consequences and pragmatic-absolutists positive, then the former should be the most negative in their moral attributions, the latter should be the most positive, and the relativists should fall intermediate.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses based on these suggested differences between the different ideologies were investigated in Experiment I. The specific predictions advanced concerning moral attributions about actions which result in mixed consequences included:

Hypothesis I

Ethical ideology should influence the severity of moral attribution. Idealistic-absolutists should be least positive in their evaluation of the actor, pragmatic-absolutists the most positive, and relativists should fall intermediate.

Hypothesis II

IIA. The attributions of morality made by idealistic-absolutists should emphasize the negative consequences of the action more than the positive. Thus, the correlation between the evaluation of the quality of the negative consequences and attributions of morality should be greater in magnitude than the correlation between the evaluation of the quality of the positive consequences and attribution of morality.

IIB. The attributions of morality made by pragmatic-absolutists should emphasize the positive consequences of the action more than the negative. Thus, the correlation between the evaluation of the quality of the positive consequences and attributions of morality should be greater in magnitude than the correlation between the evaluation of the quality of the negative consequences and attribution of morality.

IIC. The attributions recorded by relativists should emphasize the positive and negative consequences equally. Thus, the magnitude of the

correlations between moral attribution and the evaluations of the quality of positive and negative consequences will not be significantly different.

Hypothesis III

IIIA. The magnitude of the correlation between the evaluation of negative consequences and moral attribution should be greater for idealistic-absolutists than pragmatic-absolutists.

IIIB. The magnitude of the correlation between the evaluation of positive consequences and moral attribution should be greater for pragmatic-absolutists than idealistic-absolutists.

IIIC. The correlation between the evaluation of positive consequences for pragmatic-absolutists and the evaluation of negative consequences for idealistic-absolutists should not differ from these same correlations computed for relativists.

Method

The 64 males and 64 females who completed the materials for Experiment I were selected according to their scores on the first administration of the EPQ. An equal number of individuals from each of the four ethical ideologies tapped by the EPQ partially fulfilled a course requirement by participating.

Via written instructions subjects were told that they would be asked to read several stories, each of which would be followed by a series of questions. The instructions stressed that after they had carefully read a story, they were to answer each of the subsequent questions so that their responses were an accurate indication of their

feelings. The four described situations, which are contained in Appendix B, were similar in that in each one the central character's behavior produced both positive and negative outcomes. These outcomes, which included three good outcomes and three bad outcomes, were all the direct result of the actor's behavior, and were selected on the basis of extensive pretesting. The four vignettes described: (1) a doctor committing a mercy-killing, (2) a patient being visited by a friend who negligently reveals confidential information to the patient, (3) a psychologist conducting an experiment which involves a faked accident, and (4) the director of a research firm misrepresenting the firm's ability to successfully investigate a question posed by a client.

The dependent measures which followed each story asked subjects to rate the quality of the consequences and to make moral attributions about the actor and action. All these items employed 12-point scales with verbal labels, and included: (a) ratings of the morality of the action and actor on scales with labels of "extremely immoral," "immoral," "neither moral nor immoral," "moral," "extremely moral"; (b) ratings of the "reason or motive behind the action" on a scale which used the labels "extremely bad," "bad," "neither good nor bad," "good," "extremely good"; (c) the attribution of responsibility on a scale with the labels "not at all responsible," "slightly responsible," "somewhat responsible," "very responsible," and "completely responsible"; (d) ratings of each individual consequence and all the consequences taken together on scales with the labels "extremely bad," "bad," "neither good nor bad," "good," "extremely good." The ratings of the three positive consequences which accompanied each story were averaged together

to yield an overall evaluation of the good outcomes which resulted from the action, while the ratings of the three negative consequences were averaged together to yield an overall evaluation of the bad outcomes.

Results

After reading a scenario, subjects were asked to rate the morality of the actor and action, the quality of the actor's motive, and his/her responsibility on five items, each with 12-point scales. These responses were submitted to a 2 X 2 X 2 X 4 split-plot analysis of variance which treated sex of subject, rule-universalism, and idealism as between-subjects factors, and scenario as the within-subjects factor. Multiple comparisons, when appropriate, were conducted using Duncan's multiple range test at the 5 percent level of significance.

Hypothesis I

The attribution of morality. Subjects rated the morality of the actor, the action, and the degree to which they believed the action should have been done on three separate items. A main effect of scenario revealed in the analysis of the item "How moral do you feel [the actor] was?" F (3, 360) = 81.23, $p < .05$, indicated that the actors in the four different situations were rated somewhat differently. Examination of the means for each vignette shows that the doctor was rated most positively, followed by the psychologist, the friend visiting the patient, and lastly, the research director; the means, in order, were 9.16, 8.06, 6.60, and 5.38. The only other significant main effect was for rule-universalism with scenario; F (3, 360) = 2.61, $p < .05$. As Table 4-1

shows, on three of the four scenarios absolutists were more negative in their attributions than were relativists (ps < .05).

The only other significant effect on the attribution of morality item was an interaction of rule-universalism and idealism; F (1, 120) = 7.62, p < .05. As predicted, pragmatic-absolutists were more positive than idealistic-absolutists in their moral attributions (p < .05); the means were 6.4 and 7.6, respectively. Contrary to Hypothesis 1, however, relativists' judgments were more positive than idealistic-absolutists' but did not differ from pragmatic-absolutists'; the means for the idealistic and pragmatic relativists were 7.7 and 7.5, respectively.

A main effect of scenario, F (3, 360) = 90.50, p < .05, was also in evidence on the item "How moral do you feel the [actor's] action was?" Again, the doctor's action was rated most positively, followed by the psychologist's, the friend's, and the researcher's; the means were 8.57, 7.48, 6.69, and 4.27. Table 4-1 again contains the means for the two-way interaction of rule-universalism and scenario, F (3, 360) = 4.39, p < .05, which qualified a significant main effect of rule-universalism. As with moral evaluations of the actor, absolutists evaluated three of the four actions more negatively than did relativists. Responses to the item "Weighing the human values involved, do you feel that the [actor] should have done what he/she did?" duplicated these effects. A scenario main effect, F (3, 360) = 90.50, p < .05, was again obtained as well as the rule-universalism X scenario interaction; F (3, 360) = 2.97, p < .05. The doctor's action was rated most positively followed by the psychologist's, which was in turn rated more positively than either the friend's or the researcher's. These final two actions were

Table 4-1

The Effects of Scenario and Rule-Universalism on Attributions of Morality

Dependent Measure		Scenario			
		Doctor	Psychologist	Friend	Researcher Director
Actor's Morality	Absolutists	8.66^{b}	7.52^{c}	6.33^{e}	5.48^{f}
	Relativists	9.66^{a}	8.61^{b}	6.88^{d}	5.28^{f}
Action's Morality	Absolutists	7.88^{b}	7.11^{c}	5.28^{e}	4.56^{f}
	Relativists	9.27^{a}	7.84^{b}	6.09^{d}	3.97^{f}
Should have been done	Absolutists	8.31^{b}	7.16^{c}	4.09^{e}	4.53^{de}
	Relativists	9.02^{a}	8.38^{b}	4.98^{d}	3.89^{e}

Note: For each dependent measure, means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level by Duncan's multiple range test.

not evaluated differently. The means, in order, were 8.66, 7.75, 4.54, and 4.21. The means for the two-way interaction of rule-universalism and scenario, which parallel the other moral attribution items, are shown in Table 4-1.

Motive. Subjects evaluated the quality of the actor's motive on the item "To what degree do you think the reason or motive behind the [actor's] action was good vs. bad?" A scenario main effect, F (3, 360) = 110.68, $p < .05$, followed the previously reported pattern for attributions of morality; the means were 9.86, 9.24, 8.01, and 5.35. The three-way interaction of rule-universalism, idealism, and scenario depicted in Table 4-2 indicates that preceptions of the actor's motive differed dependent upon the ethical ideology of the attributor. For the two most positively evaluated situations (i.e., the doctor who performs a mercy-killing and the psychologist conducting an experiment), relativists were more positive in their evaluation of the actor's motive than were absolutists. However, on the intermediately evaluated vignette -- the friend visiting a patient in a hospital -- pragmatic-absolutists were more negative than judges of all the other ethical ideologies. Also, idealistic-absolutists, while not differing from idealistic-relativists, were more negative than pragmatic-relativists. These differences tended to be reversed for the most negatively evaluated scenario which described the research director misleading a client. In this instance, idealistic-absolutists inferred a more negative motive than both pragmatic-absolutists and idealistic-relativists.

Attribution of responsibility. Main effects of scenario, F (3, 360) = 12.68, $p < .05$ and rule-universalism, F (1, 120) = 3.68, $p <$

Table 4-2

The Effects of Ethical Ideology and Scenario on Perceptions of Actor's Motives

Ethical Ideology	Scenario			
	Doctor	Psychologist	Friend	Researcher
Pragmatic-absolutists	9.31^{cd}	8.59^{def}	7.19^{g}	5.91^{h}
Idealistic-absolutists	9.38^{cd}	8.47^{def}	7.97^{f}	4.63^{i}
Pragmatic-relativists	10.53^{a}	9.72^{bc}	8.78^{cde}	5.19^{hi}
Idealistic-relativists	10.21^{ab}	10.19^{bc}	8.09^{ef}	5.69^{h}

Note: Means without a single common subscript differ by Duncan's Multiple Range Test at the $\underline{p} = .05$ level of significance.

.05, were in evidence on the item "In general, how responsible was the [actor] for the outcomes which followed his action?" Unlike attributions of morality and motive, the doctor was rated as the most responsible, followed by the research director, the psychologist, and lastly, the friend; the means were 9.16, 8.71, 8.14, and 7.51, respectively. In addition, absolutists attributed more responsibility to the actor than did relativistic judges; F (1, 120) = 3.68, $p < .05$. The means were 8.64 and 8.12.

Sex differences. Males and females differed in their attributions on several items. The means for a three-way interaction of sex, idealism, and scenario obtained on evaluations of the morality of the actor and action, Fs (3, 360) = 2.96 and 3.15, ps < .05, shown in Table 4-3 reveal differences only for the doctor vignette. For both items, idealistic females were more negative than idealistic males and all pragmatists. A three-way interaction of sex, rule-universalism, and scenario was also significant on the evaluation of the action item; F (3, 360) = 3.14, $p < .05$. For males, absolutists were more negative than relativists on the doctor and psychologist scenarios, but more positive when the research director's action was being appraised. For females, absolutists were more negative than relativists on the friend visiting a patient vignette only. These means are presented in Table 4-4. Lastly, sex interacted significantly with scenario on judgments of whether the action should have been done and attributions of responsibility; Fs (3, 360) = 2.76 and 4.08, respectively (ps < .05). The means for these interactions are presented in Table 4-5.

Hypothesis 1: Summary. A consistent pattern of evaluations held throughout subjects' attributions of morality, ratings of motives, and

Table 4-3

The Effects of Scenario and Idealism on Males and Females Attributions of Morality

	Scenario			
	Doctor	Psychologist	Friend	Researcher
Morality of the Actor				
Pragmatic Males	9.25[a]	8.28[b]	6.87[c]	5.44[d]
Idealistic Males	9.53[a]	7.66[b]	6.56[c]	5.56[d]
Pragmatic Females	9.94[a]	8.28[b]	6.47[c]	5.53[d]
Idealistic Females	7.91[b]	8.03[b]	6.50[c]	5.00[d]
Morality of the Action				
Pragmatic Males	8.69[b]	7.63[c]	5.94[d]	4.31[e]
Idealistic Males	8.94[ab]	7.38[c]	5.69[d]	4.25[e]
Pragmatic Females	9.44[a]	7.28[c]	5.50[d]	4.25[e]
Idealistic Females	7.22[c]	7.63[c]	5.63[d]	4.25[e]

Note: For each dependent measure, means without a single common subscript differ by Duncan's Multiple Range Test at the $p = .05$ level.

Table 4-4

The Effects of Scenario and Universalism on Males and Females Attribution of Morality

	Scenario			
	Doctor	Psychologist	Friend	Researcher
Morality of the Action				
Absolutistic Males	7.75^{c}	6.72^{de}	5.53^{fg}	4.88^{gh}
Relativistic Males	9.88^{a}	8.28^{bc}	6.09^{ef}	3.69^{i}
Absolutistic Females	8.00^{bc}	7.50^{cd}	5.03^{g}	4.25^{hi}
Relativistic Females	8.66^{b}	7.41^{cd}	6.09^{ef}	4.25^{hi}

Note: Means without a single common subscript differ by Duncan's Multiple Range Test at the $p = .05$ level.

Table 4-5

The Effect of Scenario on Males and Females Judgments of Whether the Action Should Have Been Done and the Attribution of Responsibility

	Scenario			
	Doctor	Psychologist	Friend	Researcher
Should the action have been done?				
Males	8.25^{b}	7.53^{b}	5.02^{c}	4.33^{cd}
Females	9.08^{a}	8.00^{b}	4.06^{d}	4.09^{d}
Attribution of Responsibility				
Males	8.53^{b}	8.48^{b}	7.53^{c}	8.55^{b}
Females	9.78^{a}	7.80^{c}	7.48^{c}	8.87^{b}

Note: For each dependent variable, means without at least one common subscript differ by Duncan's Multiple Range Test at the $p = .05$ level.

attributions of responsibility. Overall, the motives of the physician who allowed his terminally ill patient to die were rated most positively and he was delegated the most responsibility, but he was also rated to be the most moral of all the depicted characters. On the other hand, the research director who purposefully lied to his client was also perceived to be highly responsible for the negative consequences which followed his action, but he was evaluated as the most immoral and to have the worst motives.

Attributions also varied according to ethical ideology. Overall, relativists more than absolutists felt the action which was described should have been done and attributed less responsibility to the actor. Second, and as predicted by Hypothesis I, idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality to the actor than did pragmatic-absolutists. Relativists, however, did not fall intermediate but instead attributed the same amount of morality to the actor as did pragmatic-absolutists.

Consequences and the Attribution of Morality

Hypothesis II. Only marginal support was obtained for the prediction that idealistic-absolutists would emphasize negative consequences, pragmatic-absolutists positive, and relativists both. Table 4-6 contains the correlations between the averaged evaluation of good and bad consequences and attributions of morality. Inspection of these coefficients indicates that for idealistic-absolutists the correlations between good and bad consequences and attribution of morality are small and about equal, failing to support Hypothesis IIA. Some support for Hypothesis IIB was obtained, however, since for pragmatic-absolutists the evaluation of the negative consequences was not significantly

Table 4-6

Relationship between the Evaluation of Positive and Negative Consequences and the Attribution of Morality

Ethical Ideology	Quality of the Consequences	
	Positive	Negative
Pragmatic-absolutists	.337	.131
Idealistic-absolutists	.229	.227
Pragmatic-relativists	.162	.495*
Idealistic-relativists	.542*	.491*

*significant at the $p = .05$ level.

correlated with moral attribution; the correlation between the evaluation of positive consequences and attribution of morality was marginally significant ($p < .06$). Lastly, while the attributions of idealistic-relativists supported predictions since their evaluations of both positive and negative consequences were significantly correlated with attributions, the pragmatic-relativists' attributions followed an unexpected pattern; for these relativists the correlation between the evaluation of negative consequences and attribution of morality was significant, while the correlation between positive consequences and the attribution of morality was not.

Hypothesis III. Although the correlations between consequence evaluations and attributions for the absolutists differed in the predicted direction, the differences between attributors in the different ideologies were not very pronounced. As predicted, the correlation between negative consequences and attributions was greater for idealistic-absolutists than pragmatic-absolutists, but not significantly so. Similarly, the correlation between positive consequences and attributions was greater for pragmatic-absolutists than idealistic-absolutists, but again this difference did not reach significance. Only the attributions of relativists followed the predicted pattern since: (1) the correlation between the evaluations of the positive consequences and attribution of morality was not significantly different for pragmatic-absolutists and relativists and (2) the correlation between the evaluations of the negative consequences and attribution of morality was not significantly different for idealistic-absolutists and relativists.

In sum, the relationship between appraisals of consequences and moral attributions were for the most part supported for pragmatic-absolutists

and idealistic-skeptics, not for idealistic-absolutists, and the predicted differences between idealistic and pragmatic-absolutists were in the appropriate direction but not significant.

Evaluations of consequences. As previously noted, subjects' evaluations of the quality of the consequences were measured in two different ways. The first measure asked subjects to rate each consequence individually, and the resulting appraisals were averaged to yield an evaluation of positive consequences score and an evaluation of negative consequences score for each scenario. In addition, subjects also responded to the item "Overall, how do you personally evaluate the consequences which followed the [actor's] action?" Responses to this latter item were submitted to a 2 X 2 X 2 X 4 split-plot analysis of variance which treated sex of subject, rule-universalism, and idealism as between-subjects factors and scenario as a within-subjects factor. Results indicated that males evaluated the consequences more favorably than females, F (1, 120) = 3.68, $p < .05$ (means = 6.55 and 6.12), absolutists were more negative than relativists, F (1, 120) = 4.05, $p < .05$ (means = 6.11 and 6.56), and the consequences of the mercy-killing scenario were rated most positively, followed by the psychology experiment, the research study, and the friend visiting a patient; F (3, 360) = 190.87, $p < .05$. The means were 8.74, 8.09, 4.42, and 4.09, respectively.

The averaged positive consequences and the averaged negative consequences for each of the 4 scenarios were submitted to a 2 X 2 X 2 X 4 X 2 split-plot analysis of variance which treated sex of subject, rule-universalism, and idealism as between-subjects factors and scenario and quality of the outcome as within-subjects factors. A significant

main effect of outcome, F (1, 120) = 1753.72, $p < .05$, indicated that positive consequences were more favorably evaluated than negative consequences; the means were 9.35 and 4.11. Other lower order effects, including main effects of scenario and idealism and idealism X outcome and scenario X outcome interactions were qualified by the four-way interaction of scenario, outcome, idealism, and rule-universalism; F (3, 360) = 3.78, $p < .05$. The means for this interaction are presented in Table 4-7. Although the magnitude of the differences varies depending upon which scenario subjects were responding to, in general judges of each of the four ethical ideologies did not differ in their evaluations of the quality of positive consequences. However, the ratings of the negative consequences were quite compatible with the attribution of morality hypothesis which predicted idealistic-absolutists would be most negative, pragmatic-absolutists most positive, and relativists would be neutral. Across all four scenarios idealistic-absolutists evaluated negative consequences less favorably than did pragmatic-absolutists and, on the whole, relativists fell intermediate between the two universalistic ideologies.

Experiment I: Summary of Results

These results lend mixed support to the three hypotheses advanced regarding the differential emphasis of consequences by individuals in the various ethical ideologies. Overall, the attributions of pragmatic-absolutists and idealistic-relativists followed the pattern predicted. Pragmatic-absolutists' judgments, unlike those of the other attributors, were more closely related to the positive consequences than the negative consequences produced by the action. Also, as predicted,

Table 4-7

The Effects of Scenario, Outcome Quality, and Ethical Ideology on Evaluations of Consequences

	Pragmatic-absolutists	Idealistic-absolutists	Pragmatic-relativists	Idealisitic-relativists
Doctor Scenario				
Positive Outcomes	9.85[b]	10.06	10.62[a]	9.93[b]
Negative Outcomes	6.14[c]	4.94[e]	5.79[cd]	5.51[d]
Visiting Patient Scenario				
Positive Outcomes	9.21[a]	8.85[a]	9.11[a]	9.44[a]
Negative Outcomes	3.10[b]	2.55[c]	2.95[b]	2.74[c]
Psychologist Scenario				
Positive Outcomes	9.71[a]	9.66[a]	10.06[a]	10.19[a]
Negative Outcomes	5.26[b]	4.13[c]	5.21[bc]	4.53[bc]

Table 4-7 (continued)

	Pragmatic-absolutists	Idealistic-absolutists	Pragmatic-relativists	Idealistic-relativists
Researcher Scenario				
Positive Outcomes	8.23^{a}	8.12^{a}	8.17^{a}	8.39^{a}
Negative Outcomes	3.69^{b}	2.76^{c}	3.18^{bc}	3.29^{bc}

Note: For any scenario, means without at least one common subscript are different by Duncan's Multiple Range Test at the $p = .05$ level.

idealistic-relativists' attributions correlated with both the positive and negative consequences, suggesting all the consequences were considered by these attributors. Unexpectedly, pragmatic-relativists' attributions of morality were related only to their evaluations of the negative consequences, while idealistic-absolutists' attributions of morality were not significantly correlated with either type of consequences.

In spite of the fact that the correlations between their evaluation of the positive and negative consequences and attribution of morality were nearly identical, idealistic-absolutists' still attributed less morality than the judges in all the other ethical categories. Although this result was predicted, it was hypothesized only because idealistic-absolutists were believed to place greater weight on the negative consequences rather than the positive ones. However, since this was found to not be the case, the reason for their more negative evaluations is not completely clear. One explanation, however, is suggested by the ratings of the quality of the consequences data. As was predicted for attribution of morality, idealistic-absolutists were the least positive in their ratings of the negative consequences, pragmatic-absolutists were the most positive, and relativists were neutral. Thus, it is possible that while idealistic-absolutists did not place greater weight on the negative consequences, they did attach a more negative valence to them. Thus, the attributions of morality made by idealistic-absolutists were more negative since they perceived the negative consequences of the actions to be worse than subjects in the other ideological perspectives.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPERIMENT II: RESPONSIBILITY, CONSEQUENCES, AND MORAL EVALUATIONS

Although one's evaluation of the moral quality of an action is a primary determinant of moral attribution, such an appraisal has little impact on moral judgment if the actor is not perceived to be responsible for the action. In fact, moral attribution and the attribution of responsibility are so integrally related that the term "responsible" often implies a moral accountability (Goffman, 1971; Oxford English Dictionary, 1970). Because of this close relationship between attribution of morality and responsibility, Experiment II investigated how individuals who endorse different ethical ideologies take into account the responsibility of the actor and the quality of the consequences of an action when they make moral attributions.

Hypotheses

The allocation of responsibility has been found to depend upon a number of factors which must necessarily be in evidence in a situation if an individual is to be considered responsible for an act and its consequences. The research conducted by Shaw and others (Shaw, 1968; Shaw & Reitan, 1969; Shaw & Sulzer, 1964) described in Chapter One suggests that attribution of responsibility depends upon causal attribution, the extent to which the actor could foresee and intended

the consequences, and the action's quality and justifiability. In general, Shaw's research leads to two basic conclusions. First, the research supports Heider's conceptualization of the five levels of responsibility since, as the model predicts, attribution of responsibility was found to increase directly from level 1 to level 4. Thus, greater responsibility was allocated as situations ranged from simple association with an outcome, to causality, to foreseeability, and to intentionality. Also, attribution of responsibility decreased at level 5, which is comprised of situations in which the action is somewhat justified. The second conclusion suggests that individuals are held more responsible for negative consequences than for positive consequences, especially at the more "complex" levels of responsibility; that is, when the consequences are foreseeable, intended, or even somewhat justified. In general other research has supported this "negativity of consequences" effect for both attributions of responsibility (e.g., Chaikin & Darley, 1973; Harvey, Harris, & Barnes, 1975; Phares & Wilson, 1972) and action evaluation (e.g., Birnbaum, 1974), although several studies have failed to find the effect (e.g., Shaver, 1970; Shaw & Skolnick, 1971).

Hypothesis 1

While numerous theoretical explanations have been suggested to account for the greater impact of negative information rather than positive (e.g., Birnbaum, 1974; Lerner, 1965; Shaver, 1970; Walster, 1966), several attribution theorists (e.g., Medway & Lowe, 1975; Kelley, 1971) suggest that it is best explained in information processing terms. They argue that negative information, because it is unexpected, is attributionally more informative than positive information. Therefore, it has a greater impact on the final evaluation formed. Given

the assumption that negative information does have a greater impact because of its unexpectedness, then ethical ideology of the judge should influence the extent to which the "negativity of consequences" effect is in evidence. For example, the idealistic attributor assumes that most negative outcomes can be avoided, while one who is pragmatic assumes that negative consequences will unfortunately but unavoidably be produced. Therefore, negative consequences are more expected for the idealist, and so should result in a more negative action appraisal and moral attribution, and stronger internal attribution to the actor. When the action produces positive consequences, on the other hand, idealistic and pragmatic attributors' evaluations should not differ. Thus, Hypothesis I predicts:

IA. When the consequences of an action are negative, idealists should perceive the actor to be more responsible than pragmatic attributors.

IB. When the consequences of an action are negative, idealists should evaluate the action more negatively than pragmatic attributors.

IC. When the consequences of an action are negative, idealists should attribute less morality to the actor than pragmatic attributors.

Hypothesis II

The individual's attributions of morality, however, may also be influenced by his or her belief in the existence of universal moral principles. As previously suggested, idealistic-absolutist attributors should evaluate the action more negatively than pragmatic-absolutists due to their focus on negative consequences. This, when combined with the tendency for the idealistic judge to hold the actor to be more responsible,

should result in the idealistic-absolutist attributors perceiving the actor who produces negative consequences as more immoral than the idealistic-relativistic and pragmatic attributors. Thus, hypothesis II predicts: When the consequences of an action are negative, idealistic-absolutists' attributions of morality should be more negative than pragmatic-absolutists'. Relativists' attributions should fall intermediate.

The extent to which attributions and action evaluations will follow the predictions suggested above will also, in part, be determined by the responsibility of the actor for the action. It is expected that the differences suggested in both hypotheses will be most pronounced when the actor is either partially or fully responsible for his actions; that is, when the actor is responsible at level 3, 4, or 5.

Method

The 32 males and 32 females who completed the materials for Experiment II were selected based on their scores on the EPQ. An equal number of individuals from each of the four ethical ideologies tapped by the EPQ were selected.

The methods used were modelled after those developed by Shaw in his research dealing with the attribution of responsibility. Subjects were asked to read a series of brief stories about a person named Perry and were told they would be asked to answer several questions about each one. The stories were drawn from Shaw's Attribution of Responsibility Questionnaire, and each one described an event that Perry is associated with in some way. Each of the stories is specific to one

of Heider's levels of responsibility such that each "incorporates only the minimum variables necessary to elicit attribution" at the five levels (Shaw & Reitan, 1969, p. 219). In addition, the outcomes of the described events vary in quality since the consequences were either positive or negative. Two stories were used to represent each cell of the 5 (level of actor's responsibility) by 2 (quality of consequences) factorial design, so that each subject was presented with 20 stories to read. The following stories exemplify those used in the study, and all 20 vignettes are presented in Appendix C.

> X was draining the water from his pool so that it could be cleaned and repaired. When the water was about a foot deep, a small child fell into the pool and was not found for about an hour. If the pool had been full of water, the child undoubtedly would have drowned. Is X responsible for saving the child's life (II, positive consequences)?
>
> X was watching a parade from a street corner when a man came along and ordered him to move to a new position. X refused, whereupon the man called X a dirty name and gave him a shove. X then punched the man in the nose. Is X responsible for punching the man in the nose (V, negative)?
>
> X was washing the windows in his room. When he finished, he threw the water out of the window without looking. As luck would have it, the water put out a blaze that had been started by a careless person dropping a lighted match into some dry leaves. Is X responsible for putting out the fire (III, positive consequences)?

After reading each of the stories in the questionnaire, subjects were asked to complete three 12-point items with labelled endpoints. The first assessed attribution of responsibility by asking "How responsible is Perry for the outcome?" with endpoints of "responsible" and "not responsible." Evaluation of the action was measured on the second item, which asked "Was the outcome good or bad?" The final question, "How moral do you think Perry was?" measured attribution of morality using

the endpoints "immoral" and "moral." Since each cell of the 5 (responsibility) by 2 (quality) design was represented by two stories, responses to these two items were averaged to yield a single attribution of responsibility, attribution of morality, and evaluation of the outcome score for each cell.

Results

The results of the analyses of variance performed on attributions of responsibility, evaluation of the quality of the outcome, and attribution of morality are summarized in Table 5-1 (only significant effects are presented). The 2 X 2 X 2 X 2 X 5 mixed analysis of variance treated sex of subject, idealism, and rule universalism as between-subjects factors and outcome quality (positive and negative) and actor's level of responsibility (levels 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) as the within-subjects factors. All multiple comparisons were performed using Duncan's multiple range test at the 5 percent level of significance.

Attribution of Responsibility

A significant main effect of level of responsibility on attributions indicated that responsibility allocation increased from level 1 through to level 4, but decreased for level 5 actions, replicating the results previously reported by Shaw (e.g., Shaw & Reitan, 1969; Shaw & Sulzer, 1964). The means, by level of responsibility, were 1.86, 6.40, 9.52, 11.67, and 9.94. A significant main effect of outcome quality, however, was qualified by the interaction of quality with level of responsibility. As the means in Table 5-2 show, the quality of the outcome did not influence attributions at levels 1, 4, and 5. However,

Table 5-1

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Sources Significant at the 10 Percent Level or Better (Experiment II)

MEASURE: Attribution of Responsibility	df	MS	F	p
Outcome Quality	1	18.06	5.41	.01
Level	4	1920.91	501.32	.001
Quality X Level	4	203.28	95.82	.001
Sex X Quality X Level	4	9.65	4.55	.01
MEASURE: Evaluation of the Outcome				
Idealism	1	7.66	3.87	.10
Quality	1	15651.9	7866.6	.001
Level	4	58.45	43.59	.001
Sex X Quality	1	15.62	7.85	.01
Idealism X Quality	1	12.38	6.22	.05
Quality X Level	4	72.79	71.72	.001
Sex X Idealism X Level	4	4.43	3.31	.05
Sex X Quality X Level	4	3.13	3.09	.05
Idealism X Quality X Level	4	2.26	2.20	.10
Rule X Idealism X Quality X Level	4	2.64	2.60	.05
MEASURE: Attribution of Morality				
Quality	1	1082.90	603.59	.001
Level	4	196.81	53.56	.001
Sex X Quality	1	7.99	4.45	.05
Idealism X Quality	1	9.88	5.50	.05
Idealism X Level	4	10.53	2.86	.05
Quality X Level	4	583.67	315.28	.001
Idealism X Quality X Level	4	5.67	3.07	.05
Rule X Idealism X Quality X Level	4	3.69	1.99	.10

Table 5-2

Effects of Level of Responsibility and Outcome Quality on Attribution of Responsibility, Outcome Evaluations, and the Attribution of Morality

MEASURE: Attribution of Responsibility

	Level of Responsibility				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Positive Outcomes	1.81^{f}	8.69^{d}	8.42^{d}	11.55^{a}	9.73^{c}
Negative Outcomes	1.87^{f}	4.11^{e}	10.61^{b}	11.79^{a}	10.15^{bc}

MEASURE: Outcome Evaluations

	Level of Responsibility				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Positive Outcomes	11.85^{a}	11.81^{a}	11.68^{a}	11.80^{a}	11.61^{a}
Negative Outcomes	1.19^{c}	1.23^{c}	1.16^{c}	1.31^{c}	4.41^{b}

MEASURE: Attribution of Morality

	Level of Responsibility				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Positive Outcomes	8.40^{c}	8.23^{c}	7.23^{d}	11.41^{a}	8.70^{bc}
Negative Outcomes	8.52^{c}	9.11^{b}	4.51^{e}	1.60^{f}	7.22^{d}

Note: The higher score, the greater the attribution or the more positive the evaluation. For any single dependent measure, means without a common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

when the actor was responsible at the level of causality (level 2), positive outcomes led to greater responsibility attribution than negative outcomes. At the level of foreseeability (level 3), just the reverse occurred; positive outcomes led to less responsibility allocation than negative ones.

The three-way interaction of outcome quality, level, and sex of subject revealed that males and females differed in their attributions of responsibility for level 2 and level 5 actions. The means presented in Table 5-3 show that females, in comparison to males, felt the level 2 actor was more responsible if he produced a positive outcome but less responsible if he produced a negative one. Also, females attributed more responsibility to the level 5 actor who produced a negative outcome than did males.

Respondents' attributions of responsibility paralleled the findings of Shaw and his associates. In general, as additional factors -- including causality, foreseeability, and intentionality -- were introduced in the situation, greater responsibility was attributed to the actor. Also, when the justificatory environmental factors of level 5 were present in a situation, attribution of responsibility decreased to the same amount as level 3. The quality of the consequences also influenced attributions of responsibility. For the more complex situations (e.g., levels 3, 4, and 5), more responsibility was attributed to the actor who produced negative, rather than positive consequences. This effect, which has most pronounced for the level 3 situations, was reversed when the actor had merely caused the outcome. In this case, a positive outcome led to greater attribution of responsibility than a negative outcome, perhaps

Table 5-3

Effects of Level of Responsibility and Outcome Quality on Males and Females Attribution of Responsibility and Evaluations of Outcomes

MEASURE: Attribution of Responsibility

		Level of Responsibility				
		I	II	III	IV	V
Males	Positive Outcomes	1.95^{j}	8.30^{g}	8.25^{g}	11.59^{ab}	9.78^{de}
	Negative Outcomes	2.11^{j}	4.70^{h}	10.30^{cd}	11.72^{a}	9.72^{de}
Females	Positive Outcomes	1.66^{j}	9.08^{ef}	8.59^{fg}	11.53^{ab}	9.69^{de}
	Negative Outcomes	1.63^{j}	3.52^{i}	10.92^{bc}	11.86^{a}	10.58^{c}

MEASURE: Evaluation of the Outcome

		Level of Responsibility				
		I	II	III	IV	V
Males	Positive Outcomes	11.91^{ab}	11.73^{ab}	11.55^{ab}	11.63^{ab}	11.34^{b}
	Negative Outcomes	1.36^{d}	1.31^{d}	1.14^{d}	1.45^{d}	5.00^{c}
Females	Positive Outcomes	11.80^{ab}	11.89^{ab}	11.81^{ab}	11.98^{a}	11.86^{ab}
	Negative Outcomes	1.02^{d}	1.14^{d}	1.19^{d}	1.17^{d}	3.83^{d}

Note: The higher the score, the greater the attribution or the more positive the evaluation. For any single dependent measure, means without a common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

indicating that judges infer greater foreseeability and intentionality when an action has a positive outcome.

Although these results support past findings concerning the effects of level of responsibility and outcome quality on attributions, the differences due to ethical ideology predicted by Hypothesis IA were not obtained. Idealistic attributors did not ascribe greater responsibility than pragmatic evaluators, even when the consequences were negative.

Evaluation of the Outcome

The highly significant main effect of outcome quality on subjects' ratings of the "goodness" of the action indicated that positive outcomes were rated much more favorably than negative outcomes. The means on the 12-point scale were 11.7 and 1.9, respectively. In addition, a significant main effect of level of responsibility was qualified by the two-way interaction of level and quality. The means reported in Table 5-2 show that the positive outcomes at all of the 5 levels of responsibility were rated about equally. However, when the outcome was negative, evaluations were more positive if the actor was responsible at level 5. This difference in the evaluation of level 5 actions may have been largely due to males' responses rather than females'. As the three-way interaction of sex, quality of outcome, and level of responsibility (which qualifies a two-way interaction of sex and outcome) shows, males and females evaluated only level 5 actions differently. From the means in the lower half of Table 5-3, it can be seen that both males and females rated the action less favorably when it produced a negative outcome

rather than a positive one; males, however, rated the negative outcome more favorably than the females. Similarly, the means for the three-way interaction of sex, idealism, and level of responsibility also indicate that males and females differed only for level 5 actions. As shown in Table 5-4, pragmatic males rated the level 5 action more positively than idealistic males and all females. Overall, then, males' and females' evaluations of the actions differed very little. Males' attributions about situations which yielded negative outcomes were, however, apparently more strongly influenced by justificatory factors. The two negative-outcome/level-5 situations which subjects evaluated both involved self-defense ending in the aggressor being killed. Although these actions were certainly not applauded by the males, self defense may be viewed as less pernicious by them -- particularly if they take a pragmatic approach to moral issues.

The two-way interaction of idealism with outcome quality yields strong support for Hypothesis 1B. As the means shown in the right-most column of Table 5-5 indicate, pragmatic and idealistic attributors evaluated the action similarly when the consequences were positive; if the outcome was negative idealistic attributors were more critical than pragmatic attributors ($p < .05$). However, the marginally significant three-way interaction of idealism, quality, and level ($p < .10$), whose means are also presented in Table 5-5, suggests that while there is a tendency for idealists to be more negative in their evaluations at levels 1, 3, and 4, the effect is significant only when the actor is responsible at the level of justification (level 5).

Table 5-4

Effects of Idealism and Level of Responsibility on Males' and Females' Outcome Evaluations

		Level of Responsibility				
		I	II	III	IV	V
Males	Pragmatic	6.72^{c}	6.59^{c}	6.31^{c}	6.59^{c}	8.94^{a}
	Idealistic	6.55^{c}	6.45^{c}	6.38^{c}	6.48^{c}	7.41^{b}
Females	Pragmatic	6.49^{c}	6.45^{c}	6.59^{c}	6.66^{c}	7.81^{b}
	Idealistic	6.33^{c}	6.58^{c}	6.41^{c}	6.50^{c}	7.89^{b}

Note: The higher the score, the more positive the evaluation. Means without a common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

Table 5-5

Effects of Idealism, Outcome Quality, and Level of Responsibility on the Evaluation of the Outcome and Attribution of Morality

MEASURE: Evaluation of the Outcome

		Level of Responsibility					
		I	II	III	IV	V	Average
Pragmatic	Positive Outcomes	11.89^{a}	11.81^{a}	11.61^{a}	11.66^{a}	11.64^{a}	11.72
	Negative Outcomes	1.31^{d}	1.23^{d}	1.30^{d}	1.59^{d}	5.11^{b}	2.11
Idealistic	Positive Outcomes	11.81^{a}	11.81^{a}	11.75^{a}	11.95^{a}	11.58^{a}	11.78
	Negative Outcomes	1.06^{d}	1.22^{d}	1.03^{d}	1.03^{d}	3.72^{c}	1.61

MEASURE: Attribution of Morality

		Level of Responsibility					
		I	II	III	IV	V	Average
Pragmatic	Positive Outcomes	7.98^{de}	8.09^{cde}	7.61^{e}	11.14^{a}	8.56^{cd}	8.68
	Negative Outcomes	8.25^{cde}	8.78^{bc}	4.81^{g}	2.08^{h}	7.70^{e}	6.33

Table 5-5 (continued)

MEASURE: Attribution of Morality (continued)

		Level of Responsibility					
		I	II	III	IV	V	Average
Idealistic	Positive Outcomes	8.81^{bc}	8.36^{cde}	6.84^{f}	11.69^{a}	8.84^{bc}	8.91
	Negative Outcomes	8.80^{bc}	9.44^{b}	4.20^{g}	1.13^{i}	6.73^{f}	6.06

Note: The higher the score, the greater the attribution or the more positive the evaluation. For any single dependent measure, means without a common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level (excluding the overall means).

Table 5-6, which presents the means for the 4-way interaction of rule-universality, idealism, outcome quality, and level of responsibility also suggests that the greatest differences between attributors of different ethical ideologies occurs when the actor produces a negative outcome which is justified (level 5). Idealistic-relativists rated the outcome less favorably than both idealistic and pragmatic-absolutists, who were less favorable than pragmatic-relativists.

In sum, action evaluation was influenced by the ethical ideology of the subject. As predicted, idealistic subjects evaluated actions with negative consequences less favorably than pragmatic subjects. This effect, however, was statistically significant only if the actor's behavior was somewhat justified. Apparently, subjects who are idealistic are less willing than pragmatic individuals to excuse the actor's behaviors. In addition, the impact of responsibility-reducing elements was most clearly in evidence on relativists' evaluations of the actions. At level 5, pragmatic-relativists evaluated the action most positively, while idealistic-relativists evaluated the action most negatively. These highly negative evaluations of the action by the idealistic-relativists are consistent with their evaluations of the action which occurred at the other four levels of responsibility. Table 5-6 shows the remarkable degree of consistency which characterized their attributions. At levels 1 through 4, all 16 of the idealistic-relativists rated the actions as completely "bad." This high degree of agreement among these relativists suggests that action evaluation may play a more important part in the moral judgment processes of attributors who endorse this ethical ideology.

Table 5-6

The Effects of Ethical Ideology, Outcome Quality, and Level of Responsibility on Outcome Evaluation

Ethical Ideology	Outcome Quality	Level of Responsibility I	II	III	IV	V
Pragmatic-absolutists	Positive	11.91[a]	11.86[a]	11.47[a]	11.44[a]	11.47[a]
	Negative	1.16[b]	1.28[b]	1.44[b]	1.72[b]	4.69[c]
Idealistic-absolutists	Positive	11.66[a]	11.63[a]	11.69[a]	11.94[a]	11.50[a]
	Negative	1.13[b]	1.44[b]	1.06[b]	1.06[b]	4.53[c]
Pragmatic-relativists	Positive	11.88[a]	11.75[a]	11.75[a]	11.88[a]	11.81[a]
	Negative	1.47[b]	1.19[b]	1.16[b]	1.47[b]	5.53[b]
Idealistic-relativists	Positive	11.97[a]	12.00[a]	11.81[a]	11.97[a]	11.66[a]
	Negative	1.00[b]	1.00[b]	1.00[b]	1.00[b]	2.91[d]

Note: The higher the score, the more positive the evaluation of the action. Within any level of responsibility, means without a common subscript differ at $p = .05$.

Attribution of Morality

Main effects of both outcome quality and level of responsibility were qualified by their significant interaction. As the means presented in Table 5-2 show, at the level of association the actor linked with a negative outcome was judged to be as moral as the actor linked with a positive outcome. At level 2, however, a negative outcome led to greater attribution of morality than did a positive outcome. In explanation, it is likely that this more favorable evaluation resulted from subjects attempting to indicate that despite having produced a negative consequence, the individual is still moral since the consequence was not foreseeable. At all of the higher levels of responsibility -- foreseeability, intentionality, and justification -- the actor who was linked with a negative outcome was judged to be less moral than the actor who produced a positive outcome. In addition and as with responsibility attributions, attributions of morality were most extreme at level 4 and dropped down significantly at both levels 3 and 5. The sex by outcome quality interaction simply shows that, overall, females' attributions of morality were more positive than males when the outcome was good. The means for good and bad outcomes, respectively, were: males = 8.57 and 6.19; females = 9.02 and 6.19.

Two 2-way interactions, idealism by outcome quality and idealism by level of responsibility, were qualified by the three-way interaction of idealism, outcome quality, and level of responsibility. Table 5-5 shows that at the level of association, idealists perceived the actor who was linked to a positive outcome to be more moral than did pragmatists. At level 2, pragmatists' judgments of the actor were

uninfluenced by the quality of the consequences as they were at level 1, but idealists attributed greater morality to the actor who caused a negative outcome. As before, this more positive evaluation of the actor may have been produced by idealistic attributors' desire to emphasize that the actor was not to be blamed for having caused a negative outcome since he could not foresee the consequences.

At levels 3, 4, and 5 pragmatic evaluators were more favorable in their judgments of morality depending, however, on the quality of the outcome. At level 3, the individual who produced a bad outcome was rated as equally moral by both idealists and pragmatists, but the actor who caused a good outcome was rated as more moral by the pragmatists rather than the idealists. At levels 4 and 5 this trend reversed itself. The actor producing a good outcome was rated as equally moral by both idealists and pragmatists, while the actor who produced a negative outcome was rated more positively by pragmatists. Thus, hypothesis 1C was supported for level 3, 4, and 5 actions.

The 4-way interaction of rule-universalism, idealism, outcome quality, and level of responsibility, although only marginally significant ($p < .10$), suggests that attributions of morality varied in relation to ethical ideology. Table 5-7 shows the moral judgment means broken down by each ethical ideology. For both level 3 and 4 actions, when the outcome was bad idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality to the actor than did pragmatic-absolutists, while relativists' attributions fell intermediate. When the outcome was good, however, judges of different ethical ideologies generally did not differ in their judgments. (The single exception was that idealistic-relativists were negative in their attributions to an individual who was responsible at level 3 for

Table 5-7

The Effects of Ethical Ideology, Outcome Quality, and Level of Responsibility on the Attribution of Morality

Ethical Ideology	Outcome Quality	Level of Responsibility I	II	III	IV	V
Pragmatic-absolutists	Positive	8.22^{a}	8.00^{a}	7.66^{a}	11.22^{a}	8.75^{a}
	Negative	8.22^{a}	8.88^{ab}	4.91^{c}	2.28^{b}	7.50^{b}
Idealistic-absolutists	Positive	8.72^{a}	8.53^{ab}	7.25^{ab}	11.72^{a}	8.88^{a}
	Negative	8.81^{a}	9.38^{b}	3.84^{d}	1.06^{c}	7.28^{b}
Pragmatic-relativists	Positive	7.75^{a}	8.19^{a}	7.56^{a}	11.06^{a}	8.38^{ab}
	Negative	8.28^{a}	8.69^{ab}	4.72^{cd}	1.88^{bc}	7.91^{ab}
Idealistic-relativists	Positive	8.91^{a}	8.19^{a}	6.44^{b}	11.66^{a}	8.81^{a}
	Negative	8.78^{a}	9.50^{b}	4.56^{cd}	1.19^{c}	6.19^{c}

Note: The higher the score, the more favorable the attribution of morality. Within any level of responsibility, means without a common subscript differ at $p = .05$.

a good outcome than pragmatic judges. At the last level of responsibility, attributors again did not differ in their judgments of actors who produced positive outcomes. However, if the outcome was bad idealistic relativists were more negative in their attributions than were all other types of ethical judges. Thus, while hypothesis II was not supported at levels 1, 2, and 5, it was strongly supported for level 3 and level 4 actions.

Responsibility and Morality

As predicted, attributions of responsibility were found to be related to attributions of morality. When the consequences of an action were positive, the correlation between attributions of morality and attributions of responsibility was .31, which is significantly different from zero ($p < .001$). This same correlation for actions with negative consequences was -.67, also significantly different from zero ($p < .001$). Thus, these results are also consistent with the "negativity of consequences" effect, since morality and responsibility were more strongly correlated when the action produced negative consequences than when it produced positive consequences ($p < .05$).

Experiment II: Summary of Results

The two major hypotheses examined in the experiment focused primarily on the effects of negative consequences on attributions and action evaluation. The first hypothesis -- derived from the proposition that negative consequences influence judgments more than positive consequences since the former are more unexpected -- suggested that idealistic attributors would be more negative in their judgments than pragmatic

attributors. Overall, this hypothesis received strong support. While the idealism-pragmatism classification did not influence attributions of responsibility, idealistic subjects did evaluate actions with negative outcomes less favorably than pragmatic subjects. Also, when the actor intentionally or justifiably produced a negative outcome, idealistic subjects attributed less morality than pragmatic attributors. Conversely, when an actor engaged in a behavior which produced a positive consequence which had not been foreseen, idealistic attributors ascribed less morality to the actor than did pragmatic evaluators.

Although the test of the second hypothesis reached only marginal significance by conventional standards, the overall pattern of the means supported the prediction that idealistic-absolutists would be more negative in their attributions than pragmatic absolutists. At levels 3 and 4 idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality to the actor who produced negative consequences than did pragmatic-absolutists; as predicted, relativists attributed an intermediate amount of morality to the actor at the two levels.

Lastly, the results suggest some further differences between idealistic-relativists and attributors who endorse the other three ethical ideologies. For example, when evaluating negative outcomes, all the idealistic-relativists rated all but the level 5 actions as negatively as the scales provided permitted. In fact, even on level 5 idealistic-relativists were more negative than the other attributors. This greater condemnation of the level 5 action with negative consequences carried over to attributions of morality as well, for idealistic-relativists allocated less morality to the individual who, somewhat justifiably,

produced a negative outcome. Thus, if negative consequences result when, for example, a person attempts to defend himself, idealistic-relativists may not only strongly condemn the action, but the actor also.

CHAPTER SIX

EXPERIMENT III: THE CONSISTENCY OF ACTION WITH NORMS OF MORALITY AND MORAL JUDGMENT

The results of Experiments I and II established the impact of both attribution of responsibility and the quality of the action's consequences on attribution of morality. However, neither experiment directly investigated the role of a third, crucial factor in the moral attribution process: the assessment of the compatibility of the action with standards of moral conduct. The importance of standard-consistency on moral attribution is attested to by both philosophical analyses and psychological theory. For example, philosophical approaches such as deontology suggest that the quality of the act alone, as indicated by its compatibility with moral principles, should determine its moral evaluation. The rule-utilitarian, while arguing that the action itself can be evaluated only in the light of its consequences, recognizes and applies utility-based rules in the evaluation of action. For example, in making a moral attribution the rule-utilitarian could evaluate the quality of the action by first determining what type of action had been done, and then whether or not such types of actions are compatible with rules derived from the greatest good-greatest number principle.

Psychological analyses emphasize standards as well. Kohlberg's model argues that comparative deontological procedures underly moral judgments except in the primitive preconventional attributor. He and

Piaget both suggest that an Aristotelean balance between personal autonomy and other-directedness provides the ideal basis of morality, prescribing this ideology to serve as the content of the standards of comparison. Heider advances the intuitively plausible hypothesis of comparison with universal oughts as the key to judgments of actions, although the assumption of universality is questionnable. Lastly, theorists concerned with the perception of violence suggest a number of factors which may influence these attributions, but stress that legitimacy (Tedeschi, Smith, & Brown, 1974) or normativeness (Feshbach, 1971) are crucial determinants.

Hypotheses

Experiment III investigated how attributors take into account the compatibility of an action with moral standards when making moral judgments of others. As several theorists suggest (e.g., Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1971; Kohlberg, 1971), the evaluation of an action, and hence moral attribution is greatly influenced by the judged compatibility of the action with society's moral norms. Since norms prescribe what types of behavior are permissible and which are not permissible, consistency-with-norms information is an important type of data which is frequently made use of in the moral judgment process. However, the degree to which individuals' moral judgments are influenced by the normativeness of the behavior should in part be determined by the ethical ideology adopted by the perceiver. Ideologically, idealistic-absolutists are set apart from both relativists and pragmatic-absolutists by their belief that good rather than bad outcomes can be achieved

without breaking certain fundamental moral principles. This belief in the possibility of formulating and adhering to transtituationally rigid rules to produce positive consequences suggests that idealistic-absolutists, at least in contrast to other attributors, are more influenced by the compatibility of the action with moral standards which dictate what types of behaviors are moral and which immoral. For example, Kant, whose philosophy is admittedly a rather extreme variety of deontology, went so far as to suggest that one must tell a potential murderer the whereabouts of his victim if requested since one cannot break the moral principle forbidding lying. Although Kant's deontological moral philosophy argues that a lie, irrespective of the consequences, is immoral, Schlenker and Forsyth did find that individuals they had designated to be idealistic- absolutists ("dontologists") were influenced by the consequences of the action produced. This result, in combination with the prediction that the idealistic-absolutist assumes positive consequences can be produced without violating any conventional rules of morality, suggests that idealistic-absolutists should attribute less morality after standard-inconsistency than would other attributors -- an effect which should be most pronounced when the outcome of the action is negative. Further, if the actor maintains a strict adherence to standards, idealistic-absolutists' moral attributions should be more positive than pragmatic-absolutists' or relativists'.

The pragmatic-absolutist and relativistic ideologies, on the other hand, do not place as great an emphasis on strict adherence to standards of moral behavior. These approaches suggest that other factors, particulary the consequences of the action, must be considered when

making an attribution about another's morality. Because of this greater emphasis on the consequences, the actor who violates a moral standard in order to produce, for example, an important positive outcome should be seen as justified in his or her inconsistency with moral norms. In such an instance, the consequences of the action serve to qualify the attribution of morality following standard inconsistency. While violation of norms would usually result in less favorable attributions, consequences can partially determine the degree of moral condemnation or commendation called for by an action. Thus, if an action violates a moral standard, consequences can either extenuate or aggravate moral attributions. Extenuating consequences mitigate condemnation and punishment since they indicate that important positive outcomes were achieved as a result of the violation. Aggravating consequences, on the other hand, would lead to more negative moral evaluations since they indicate that the violation yielded undesirable negative consequences.

In addition, the consequences of an action may qualify attributions even for standard-consistent actions. If acting consistently with a standard yields very positive consequences, then these good consequences should enhance moral evaluations of the act and actor. Conversely, if extremely negative consequences result from standard-consistency, then the negativity of the consequences should detract by partially disentitling the actor.

Because the consequences of an action are more salient to "non-deontological" ethical ideologies, the degree to which consequences qualify attributions of morality should differ between the different groups of judges. "Non-deontologists" should attribute greater morality

to the individual who breaks a moral norm in order to produce a positive outcome, provided the consequence is important. Conversely, these relativists and pragmatic-absolutists should also attribute less morality to the individual who, by acting consistently with a norm of morality, produces an important negative consequence.

These differences in focus concerning both the consistency of the action with standards of morality and the qualifying effects of outcomes suggest the following hypotheses, which were examined in Experiment III.

Hypothesis I

Idealistic-absolutists, more than all other ethical attributors, will judge the individual whose actions are inconsistent with a moral standard to be less moral than an individual whose actions are consistent with a moral standard.

Hypothesis II

Idealistic-absolutists will judge the individual whose actions are inconsistent with a moral standard to be less moral than will teleologists and skeptics.

Hypothesis III

IIIA. Idealistic-absolutists, as compared to the other ethical ideologies, will attribute less morality to the individual who, in breaking a norm of morality, produces high magnitude, positive consequences.

IIIB. Idealistic-absolutists, as compared to the other ethical ideologies, will attribute more morality to the individual who, in

acting consistently with a norm of morality, produces high magnitude, negative consequences.

Methods

Subjects who did not participate in Experiment II completed the materials for Experiment III. Respondents were selected from the original 128 subjects chosen for the series of studies according to their scores on the EPQ, with an equal number of individuals from each of the four ethical ideologies tapped by the EPQ participating.

Thirty-two males and 32 females were asked to read a series of sentences which described an action and its outcome. Each sentence had the format of "Because X [performed an action], [consequences occurred]." The first portion of the sentence described an action which was either consistent or inconsistent with a standard of morality. To heighten the generalizability of the results, consistency with four different standards was examined, including theft, lying, violation of a duty, and breaking a promise. The standard-consistent stems included "Because X kept his promise," "Because X told the truth," "Because X did his duty," and "Because X did not steal something." The standard-inconsistent stems were "Because X broke his promise," "Because X lied," "Because X did not do his duty," and "Because X stole something."

The second part of the sentence stated that because of the action described in the first section, a certain outcome was produced. Both the quality and magnitude of the consequences were varied in this second part of the sentence such that the outcomes were either of high magnitude or low magnitude, and were either positive or negative. Examples

of each type of consequence follow, and all 32 consequences used in the questionnaire are presented in Appendix D.

HIGH MAGNITUDE/POSITIVE:	A child's life is saved. A little girl gets the life-saving operation she needs.
HIGH MAGNITUDE/NEGATIVE:	A little boy loses his eyesight. A passerby is horribly disfigured.
LOW MAGNITUDE/POSITIVE:	A team wins the football game. A child gets a free ticket to a movie.
LOW MAGNITUDE/NEGATIVE:	A passerby's coat gets dirty. A fishing rod is broken.

To summarize, the design of the experiment was a 2 (sex of subject) X 4 (ethical ideology) X 4 (standard of morality: lie, theft, promise, and duty) X 2 (consistency of the action: inconsistent and inconsistent) X 2 (outcome quality: positive and negative) X 2 (outcome magnitude: high and low) with the 32 outcomes nested in the outcome quality X outcome magnitude interaction. Eight different sets of action-consistency/ consequences pairings were used, and the administration of these sets was counterbalnced across the between-factors design so that each set appeared only once in any cell.

After reading each of the sentences in the questionnaire, subjects were asked to complete three 12-point items with labelled endpoints. The first assessed attribution of morality by asking "How moral do you feel X is?" with endpoints of "moral" and "immoral." The second item, "Was X's action compatible or incompatible with this society's standards of morality?" used the endpoints "compatible" and "incompatible." The final item asked "How responsible is X for what happened?" and was followed by the endpoints "responsible" and "not responsible."

Results

The results of the analysis of variance performed on attributions of responsibility, consistency of the action with standards of morality, and attribution of morality are summarized in Table 6-1. Sex and ethical ideology of the subject served as between-subjects factors in the 2 X 4 X 4 X 2 X 2 X 2 split-plot design.[1] The within-subjects factors included: the specific standard of morality (e.g., lie, duty, theft, or promise), the consistency of the action with the standard, outcome magnitude, and outcome quality. All multiple comparisons, when appropriate, were performed using Duncan's multiple range test at the 5 percent level of significance.[2]

The Consistency of the Action

A significant main effect of standard-consistency indicated that, overall, telling the truth, keeping a promise, doing a duty, and not stealing were perceived to be compatible with society's standards of

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[1] Ethical ideology of the subject was coded as a 4 level single factor classification variable rather than a 2 X 2 factorial classification variable in order to simplify the analysis; while hypotheses in the prior experiments suggested differences between high and low scorers on the single dimension (e.g., differences between idealists and pragmatists irrespective of their commitment to universal rules), all hypotheses in Experiment III were specific to a certain ethical ideology (e.g., idealistic-absolutists vs. pragmatic-relativists).

[2] The repeated measures design used in this experiment was quite powerful given that it (1) made use of reduced error variance terms by taking into account within subject variation and (2) generated large degrees of freedom for both the numerators and denominators of the F-ratios. Because of the power of the statistical tests employed, certain effects reached conventional levels of significance ($p = .05$) despite the slight magnitude of the differences producing the effect. Thus, while all significant effects are presented and discussed for the sake of completeness, those which are based on very small differences are given less consideration.

Table 6-1

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Sources Significant at the 10 Percent Level or Better (Experiment III)

	df	MS	F	p
Measure: Act Consistency				
Standard (S)	3	16.46	4.52	<.01
Consistency (C)	1	10956.62	237.75	<.01
Outcome (O)	1	3770.92	231.04	<.01
Magnitude (M)	1	38.56	9.24	<.01
Gender (G) X C	1	149.31	3.24	<.10
S X C	3	46.32	11.63	<.01
S X O	3	25.29	7.87	<.01
C X O	1	18.57	4.22	<.05
S X M	3	11.12	3.13	<.05
C X M	1	81.68	9.61	<.01
O X M	1	1195.91	128.04	<.01
G X C X O	1	22.56	5.13	<.05
S X C X O	3	14.66	4.58	<.01
S X C X M	3	21.62	6.31	<.01
G X O X M	1	34.80	3.73	<.10
G X ideology X C X O X M	3	5.82	2.35	<.10
Measure: Attribution of Responsibility				
S	3	50.51	10.77	<.01
C	1	163.13	33.29	<.01
O	1	126.01	26.43	<.01
M	1	291.01	33.70	<.01
G X C	1	18.76	3.83	<.10

Table 6-1 (continued)

	df	MS	F	p
Measure: Attribution of Responsibility (continued)				
S X C	3	142.28	27.66	<.01
C X O	1	1095.71	77.67	<.01
Ideology (I) X M	3	21.07	2.44	<.10
S X M	3	25.59	6.37	<.01
S X C X O	3	28.88	5.69	<.01
G X S X M	3	8.98	2.23	<.10
G X I X S X M	9	7.67	1.91	<.06
Measure: Attribution of Morality				
C	1	7252.59	246.69	<.01
O	1	4453.32	242.24	<.01
M	1	7.51	2.92	<.10
G X I	3	16.04	2.23	<.10
G X C	1	314.06	10.69	<.01
I X C	3	131.79	4.49	<.01
S X C	3	24.12	4.93	<.01
C X O	1	18.76	4.66	<.05
S X M	3	14.10	4.81	<.01
C X M	1	150.94	14.31	<.01
O X M	1	1959.22	204.75	<.01
G X I X C	3	109.71	3.73	<.05
S X C X O	3	23.69	7.64	<.01
S X C X M	3	29.49	11.03	<.01

Table 6-1 (continued)

	df	MS	F	p
Measure: Attribution of Morality (continued)				
G X O X M	1	35.59	3.74	<.10
G X S X C X O	3	6.98	2.25	<.10
S X C X O X M	3	8.74	2.67	<.05
I X S X C X O X M	9	7.10	2.16	<.05

morality ($\underline{M}$ = 9.0), while lying, breaking a promise, failing to do a duty, and stealing were rated as incompatible ($\underline{M}$ = 4.4). In addition, a main effect of outcome quality demonstrated actions which resulted in positive outcomes were evaluated as more compatible with standards of morality than actions with negative outcomes; the means were 8.1 and 5.4, respectively.

The means for the interaction of consistency with outcome quality are presented in Table 6-2. This minor interaction does not qualify the outcome and consistency main effects and simply shows that inconsistent actions with negative consequences were rated at least compatible with norms while consistent actions with positive consequences were rated as most compatible. The three-way interaction of consistency, outcome quality, and sex did not qualify these previously reported effects since the differences obtained were quite small. Examination of the means in Table 6-3 indicates only that (a) consistent/positive actions were rated as less compatible by males in comparison to females and (b) inconsistent actions with either positive or negative consequences were rated as less compatible by females.

A main effect of outcome magnitude was qualfied by the two-way interaction of magnitude with outcome quality. The means indicated that high magnitude/positive outcomes were rated as most compatible with society's standards, followed by low magnitude/positive outcomes, low magnitude/negative outcomes, and high magnitude/negative outcomes. The means for this interaction are presented in Table 6-4.

A main effect of standard, and 2 two-way interactions of standard with action consistency and outcome quality were qualified by the three-way interaction of standard, consistency, and outcome quality. Several

Table 6-2

The Effects of Standard Consistency and Outcome Quality on Evaluations of an Action's Compatibility with Moral Norms

	Quality of the Outcome	
Standard Consistency	Positive	Negative
Consistent	10.49^{a}	7.59^{b}
Inconsistent	5.69^{c}	3.15^{d}

Note: The higher the score, the more compatible the action with moral standards. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

Table 6-3

The Effects of Standard Consistency and Outcome Quality on Males and Females Evaluations of an Action's Compatibility with Moral Norms

	Quality of the Outcome			
	Positive		Negative	
Standard Consistency	Males	Females	Males	Females
Consistent	10.09^{b}	10.89^{a}	7.52^{c}	7.61^{c}
Inconsistent	6.02^{d}	5.33^{e}	3.46^{f}	2.84^{g}

Note: The higher the score, the more compatible the action with moral standards. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

points can be made based on examination of the interaction means in Table 6-5. First, for all four standards both consistency and outcome quality influenced evaluations of action compatibility. Again, inconsistent actions with negative consequences were rated as least compatible, while consistent actions with positive consequences were rated as most compatible. Second, most of the differences between the standards involved comparisons between stealing and the other three standards. Although ratings of compatibility did not differ for the four standards if the consequences were positive and the action consistent, when the action was inconsistent stealing was rated as more incompatible than lying, failing to do a duty, and breaking a promise. Also, refusing to steal even though a negative consequence was produced was rated as more standard-compatible than producing a negative consequence by doing a duty, keeping a promise, or telling a truth.

The means for the final interaction obtained on evaluations of the compatibility of the action with moral standards involving outcome magnitude, consistency, and standard are presented in Table 6-6. These means show that, in general, when the action was consistent with moral standards, there are no differences between the specific moral rules involved. (The single exception is that refusing to steal was rated as somewhat more compatible than doing one's duty.) Differences were obtained, however, for inconsistent actions. When a high magnitude outcome was produced, stealing and failing to do a duty were rated as less compatible than breaking a promise or telling a lie. Also, if the outcome was low in magnitude, then stealing was rated as less compatible than the other actions.

Table 6-4

The Effects of Outcome Magnitude and Outcome Quality on Evaluations of an Action's Compatibility with Moral Norms

	Quality of the Outcome	
Magnitude of the Outcome	Positive	Negative
High	8.71^{a}	4.47^{d}
Low	7.46^{b}	6.27^{c}

Note: The higher the score, the more compatible the action with moral standards. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

Table 6-5

The Effects of Standard Consistency and Outcome Quality on Evaluations of an Action's Compatibility with Four Moral Norms

	Consistency of the Action			
	Consistent		Inconsistent	
Standard of Morality	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Lie	10.49^{a}	7.57^{c}	6.18^{d}	3.11^{gh}
Promise	10.72^{a}	7.23^{c}	6.18^{d}	3.55^{g}
Theft	10.27^{a}	8.30^{b}	4.90^{f}	2.68^{h}
Duty	10.50^{a}	7.25^{c}	5.45^{e}	3.27^{g}

Note: The higher the score, the more compatible the action with moral standards. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

Table 6-6

The Effects of Outcome Magnitude and Standard Consistency on Evaluations of an Action's Compatibility with Four Moral Norms

	Consistency of the Action			
	Consistent		Inconsistent	
Standard of Morality	High Magnitude	Low Magnitude	High Magnitude	Low Magnitude
Lie	8.78^{de}	9.28^{abc}	4.70^{fg}	4.59^{gh}
Promise	8.55^{e}	9.40^{ab}	5.13^{f}	4.59^{gh}
Theft	8.89^{cde}	9.68^{a}	4.14^{hi}	3.45^{j}
Duty	8.59^{e}	9.16^{bcd}	3.94^{i}	4.79^{fg}

Note: The higher the score, the more compatible the action with moral standards. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

Table 6-7

The Effects of Outcome Quality and Standard Consistency on Attribution of Responsibility

		Standards of Morality				
Action Consistency	Outcome Quality	Lie	Promise	Theft	Duty	Totals
Inconsistent	Positive	9.06^{e}	8.23^{f}	9.38^{cde}	8.38^{f}	8.76
	Negative	9.98^{abc}	9.27^{de}	9.63^{bcde}	10.05^{ab}	9.73
Consistent	Positive	9.77^{abcd}	10.28^{a}	8.25^{f}	10.35^{a}	9.66
	Negative	7.80^{f}	8.13^{f}	6.82^{g}	8.05^{f}	7.70

Note: The higher the score, the more responsible. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

Attribution of Responsibility

A main effect of outcome quality was qualified by the interaction of quality with standard-consistency. As the means in the right-most column of Table 6-7 indicate, equal amounts of responsibility were attributed if the action was consistent with moral norms and produced positive consequences or was inconsistent and produced negative consequences. This was more responsibility, however, than was attributed when the action was inconsistent but produced positive consequences (*p*s < .05). Lastly, when the action was consistent and produced negative consequences the least responsibity was attributed (*p* < .05). These effects, however, were somewhat qualified by the significant three-way interaction of standard, outcome, and consistency (which not only qualified the two-way interaction of outcome and consistency but effects of standards, consistency, and standards X consistency). Also presented in Table 6-7, this interaction illustrates that when the standard concerned truthfulness or duty, greatest responsibility was again attributed after inconsistent/negative consequence actions and consistent/positive consequences actions. The pattern of differences was not quite the same when the standard concerned promises, for in this case greatest responsibility was attributed when a promise was kept resulting in positive consequences. Lastly, greater responsibility was attributed to the actor if a consequence was produced as a result of a theft rather than non-theft, irrespective of the quality of the consequences. The actor who produced negative consequences by refusing to steal was held to be less responsible for that outcome than one who had produced positive consequences.

Attribution of Morality

Standards, consistency, and outcomes. Whether or not the action was consistent with a standard of morality had a strong effect on attributions of morality made about the actor. Overall, the stimulus person was rated as more moral if his action was consistent, rather than inconsistent with a moral standard. The means were 8.7 and 4.9, respectively. The outcome quality by consistency and outcome quality by magnitude interactions also revealed a consistent pattern of responses in attributions. The outcome-quality-main-effect-qualifying interaction of consistency X quality is shown in Table 6-8. Examination of these means indicates that the actor was rated more favorably when the action was consistent rather than inconsistent. Also, attribution of morality was most extreme when consistency led to a positive outcome, and least when inconsistency led to a negative outcome. Table 6-9 depicts the means for the outcome quality X magnitude interaction which qualified a main effect of magnitude. As expected, high magnitude/positive outcomes led to the greatest attribution of morality, followed by low magnitude/positive outcomes, low magnitude/negative outcomes, and lastly, high magnitude/negative outcomes.

The four-way interaction of standard, consistenty, outcome quality, and outcome magnitude, which is shown in Table 6-10, qualified a number of lower order interactions (including standard X consistency, standard X magnitude, consistency X magnitude, standard X consistency X outcome, standard X consistency X magnitude). The plot of this interaction, shown in Figure 6-1, reveals a strong consistency in the pattern of results obtained across all four standards used in the experiment. First,

Table 6-8

The Effects of Standard Consistency and Outcome Quality on the Attribution of Morality

	Quality of the Outcome	
Standard Consistency	Positive	Negative
Consistent	10.06^{a}	7.30^{b}
Inconsistent	6.48^{c}	3.34^{d}

Note: The higher the score, the greater the attribution of morality. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

Table 6-9

The Effects of Outcome Magnitude and Outcome Quality on Attribution of Morality

	Quality of the Outcome	
Magnitude of the Outcome	Positive	Negative
High	9.19^{a}	4.29^{d}
Low	7.40^{b}	6.36^{c}

Note: The higher the score, the greater the attribution of morality. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

Table 6-10

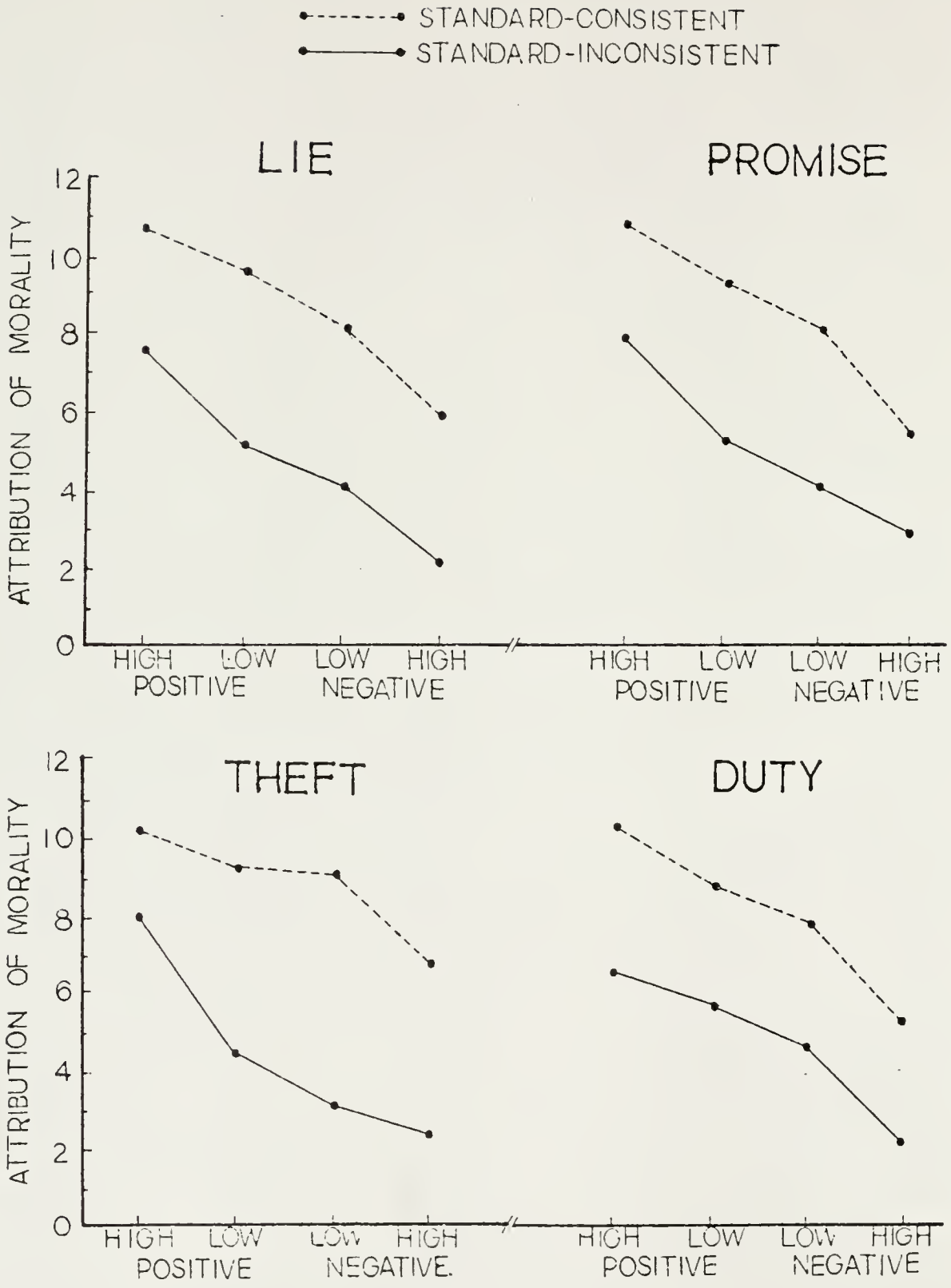
The Effects of Standard Consistency, Outcome Quality, and the Attribution of Morality

		Standard Consistent		Standard Inconsistent	
	Outcome Magnitude	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Lies	Low	9.63^{cd}	8.59^{ef}	5.17^{jkl}	4.08^{m}
	High	10.70^{ab}	6.00^{i}	7.70^{g}	2.19^{o}
Promise	Low	9.53^{d}	8.45^{ef}	5.31^{ijk}	4.50^{lm}
	High	11.01^{a}	5.56^{ij}	8.05^{fg}	3.23^{n}
Theft	Low	9.55^{d}	9.10^{de}	4.73^{klm}	3.28^{n}
	High	10.25^{bc}	6.84^{h}	8.03^{fg}	2.53^{o}
Duty	Low	9.00^{de}	8.27^{fg}	5.95^{i}	4.63^{klm}
	High	10.81^{ab}	$.61^{ij}$	6.95^{h}	2.34^{o}

Note: The higher the score, the greater the attribution of morality. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $\underline{p} = .05$ level.

Figure 6-1

The Effects of Standard Consistency, Outcome Quality, and Outcome Magnitude on Attributions of Morality


STANDARD-CONSISTENT
STANDARD-INCONSISTENT
LIE
PROMISE
THEFT
DUTY
ATTRIBUTION OF MORALITY
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
HIGH POSITIVE
LOW POSITIVE
LOW NEGATIVE
HIGH NEGATIVE

the quality of the consequences and attribution of morality were inversely related; actions with highly positive consequences yielded the greatest attribution of morality, followed by low positive actions, low negative actions, and high negative actions. This relationship between attribution of morality and outcome quality was obtained across all four standards and held irrespective of whether the action was consistent or inconsistent with the standard. In only one case did attribution fail to follow a direct linear reduction -- when the actor did not steal, attributions of morality for mild negative and positive outcomes did not differ.

The consistency of the action with a standard of morality also influenced attributions. When quality and magnitude of the consequences were controlled a consistent action was followed by greater attribution of morality than an inconsistent action. In fact, acting in a manner which was consistent with a moral standard lead to greater attribution of morality than acting inconsistently with a standard in nearly all instances. Only when the consequences of the action were extremely positive were attributions of morality for standard-inconsistent actions tempered.

A third major comparison further clarifies when attribution of morality is qualified by the quality of the consequences. For all four of the standards, standard-inconsistent actions which lead to highly positive outcomes yielded greater attribution of morality than a highly negative outcome which was standard-consistent. This extenuation was greatest when the standard was concerned with promises since high positive, inconsistent action was followed by greater attribution of morality than both low and high negative/consistent actions. For duties,

attribution of morality after a low positive/inconsistent action did not differ from attribution after a high negative/consistent action.

Lastly, several minor differences between the four standards influenced attributions of morality. When the consequences were mildly positive, greater morality was attributed to the actor who failed to do his duty rather than lied or stole. For highly positive outcomes, however, lying, breaking a promise, and stealing yielded greater attribution of morality than failing to do a duty, while keeping a promise yielded greater attributions of morality than not stealing.

The remaining differences occurred when consequences of the action were negative. For mild outcomes, lying, breaking a promise, and failing to fulfill a duty led to greater attribution of morality than stealing, while not stealing led to greater attribution of morality than doing a duty. For high negative outcomes, not stealing led to greater attribution of morality than did telling the truth, keeping a promise, and performing a duty, while breaking a promise led to greater attribution of morality than lying, stealing, or failing in a duty.

Ethical ideology. The two-way interaction of ideology and action consistency presented in Table 6-11 and graphed in Figure 6-2 supports hypotheses I and II. Overall, when the individual's actions were consistent with a standard, greater morality was attributed to him. However, the difference between ratings of individuals whose actions were consistent vs. inconsistent was greater for idealistic-absolutists than all other ethical ideologies; t (56) = 4.16 $p < .05$ (two-tailed). In addition, if the action was consistent with a standard, idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality to the actor than did pragmatic

Table 6-11

The Effects of Standard Consistency and Ethical Ideology on Attributions of Morality

Consistency with Moral Standards	Ethical Ideology: Idealistic-absolutist	Pragmatic-absolutist	Pragmatic-relativist	Idealistic relativist
Inconsistent Actions	4.13^{d}	5.08^{c}	5.38^{c}	5.09^{cd}
Consistent Actions	9.30^{a}	8.52^{ab}	8.15^{b}	8.76^{ab}

Note: The higher the score, the greater the attribution of morality. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

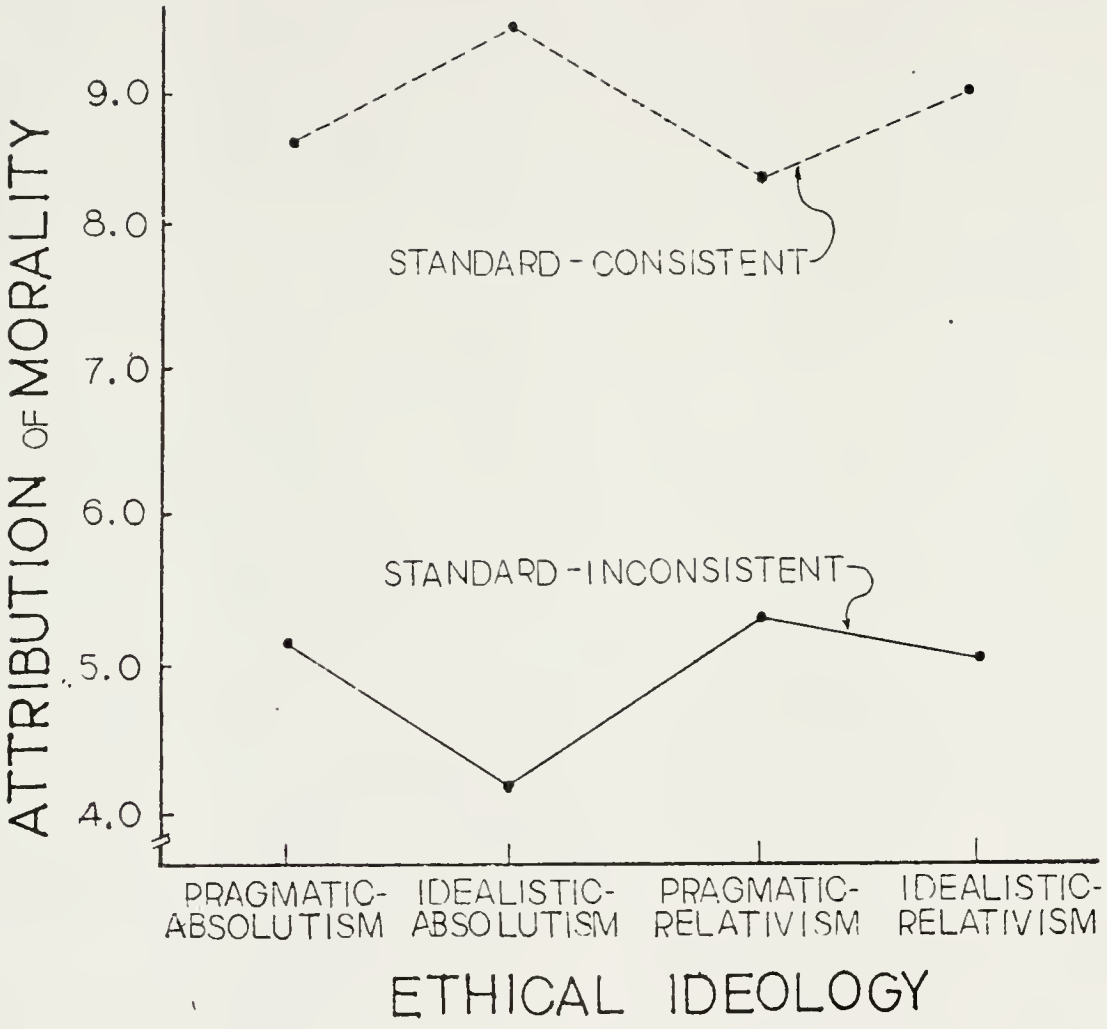


Figure 6-2

The Effects of Standard Consistency and Ethical Ideology on Attributions of Morality

attributors. Idealistic-relativists fell intermediate and did not differ from any other ideology.

The means for the complex five-way interaction of standard, ethical ideology, outcome quality, outcome magnitude, and action consistency are presented in Table 6-12 and plotted in Figure 6-3. The results can be best understood by examining attribution of morality for low and high magnitude outcomes separately. For low magnitude outcomes, the consistency of the action with moral standards was the major determinant of moral attribution. Irrespective of the quality of the outcome, the actor whose behavior was inconsistent with a moral standard was perceived to be less moral than the actor whose behavior was moral-standard-consistent. Two minor exceptions to this general effect occurred in judgments of doing one's duty. First, pragmatic-absolutists rated the individual who did his duty and produced good consequences to be as moral as the individual who failed to do his duty but still produced good consequences. Second pragmatic-relativists felt that the individual who failed to fulfill a duty but produced positive consequences was as moral as the individual who, in doing his duty, produced negative consequences. These were, however, the only instances in which the mild consequences exculpated the standard-inconsistent actor to any degree. In general, the consequences were apparently too insignificant to justify any violation of a moral standard.

Differences between judges of the differing ethical ideologies were apparent, however, even when judgments were being made about such mild outcomes, and most reflect differences between idealistic-absolutists and other positions. Over the four standards, idealistic-absolutists

Table 6-12

The Effects of Ethical Ideology, Outcome Magnitude, Outcome Quality, and Consistency with Standards of Morality on Attributions of Morality

	Low Magnitude Outcomes				High Magnitude Outcomes			
	Consistent		Inconsistent		Consistent		Inconsistent	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
STANDARD: Duty								
Idealistic-absolutists	8.19^{bcd}	8.50^{abc}	6.75^{def}	4.75^{gh}	10.88^{a}	5.75^{cd}	6.68^{bc}	2.38^{e}
Pragmatic-absolutists	9.44^{ab}	8.25^{abcd}	3.88^{h}	3.81^{h}	11.00^{a}	5.68^{bc}	6.56^{bc}	2.38^{e}
Pragmatic-relativists	8.56^{abc}	7.81^{cde}	6.44^{ef}	5.31^{fgh}	10.75^{a}	4.50^{d}	7.50^{b}	2.44^{e}
Idealistic-relativists	9.81^{a}	8.50^{abc}	6.75^{d}	4.63^{gh}	10.63^{a}	5.50^{cd}	7.06^{bc}	2.19^{e}
STANDARD: Promise								
Idealistic-absolutists	9.19^{ab}	8.38^{b}	5.88^{c}	5.13^{cd}	10.81^{a}	6.00^{de}	7.63^{bc}	3.38^{fg}
Pragmatic-absolutists	10.19^{a}	8.63^{ab}	4.63^{cd}	4.19^{d}	11.25^{a}	6.81^{cd}	7.63^{bc}	2.38^{g}
Pragmatic-relativists	8.56^{b}	8.06^{b}	5.81^{c}	4.63^{cd}	10.94^{a}	4.63^{ef}	8.69^{b}	3.38^{fg}
Idealistic-relativists	10.19^{a}	8.75^{ab}	4.94^{cd}	4.06^{d}	11.06^{a}	4.81^{ef}	8.25^{bc}	3.81^{fg}

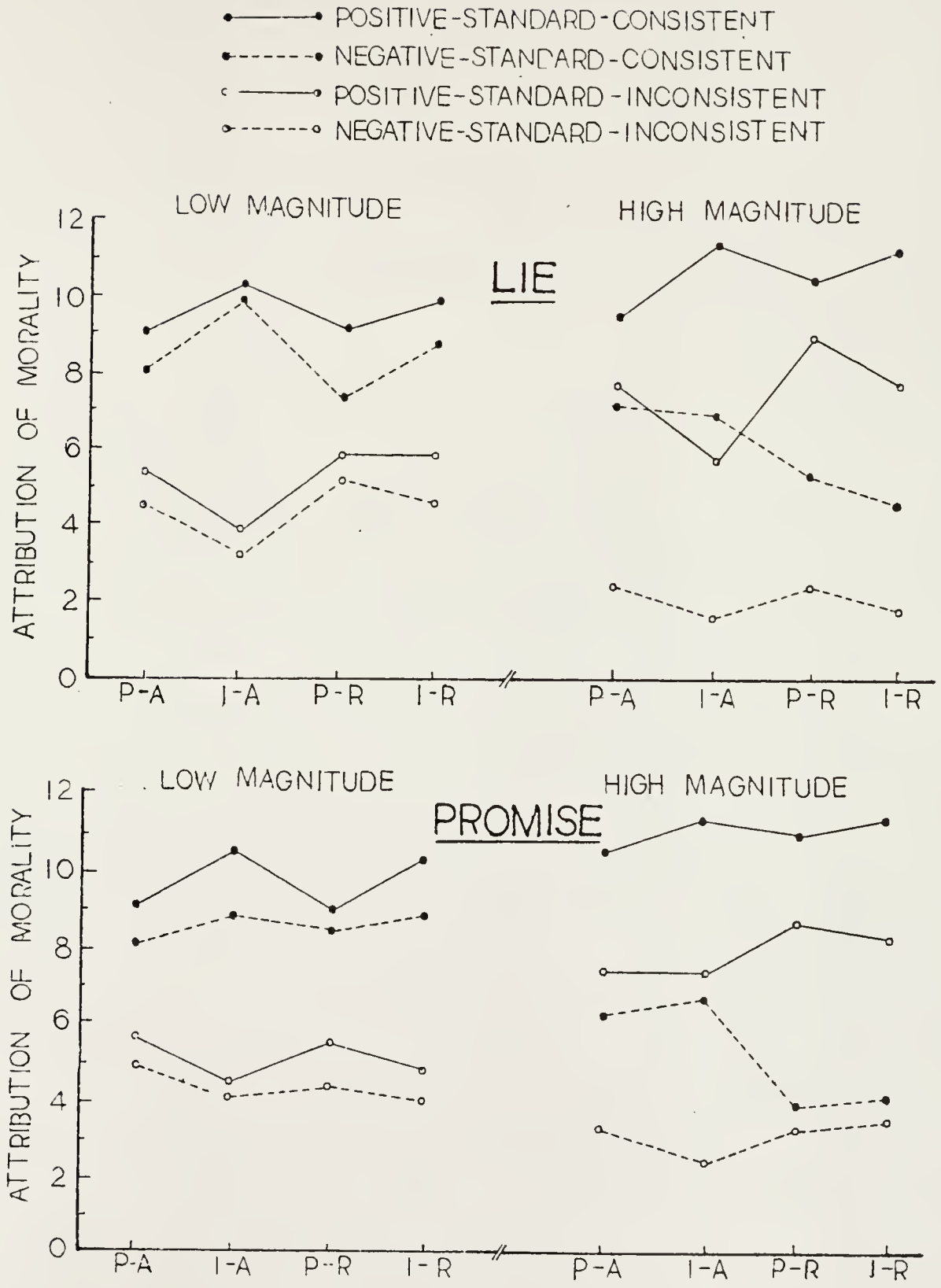
Table 6-12 (continued

	Low Magnitude Outcomes				High Magnitude Outcomes			
	Consistent		Inconsistent		Consistent		Inconsistent	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
STANDARD: Lie								
Idealistic-absolutists	9.00^{abcd}	8.06^{cd}	5.13^{efg}	4.25^{fgh}	9.69^{cd}	7.06^{e}	7.88^{de}	2.44^{h}
Pragmatic-absolutists	10.44^{a}	9.94^{ab}	3.88^{gh}	3.06^{h}	11.38^{a}	6.63^{e}	5.94^{f}	1.94^{h}
Pragmatic-relativists	9.25^{abc}	7.56^{d}	5.81^{ef}	4.94^{efg}	10.63^{abc}	5.50^{fg}	9.13^{dc}	2.31^{h}
Idealistic-relativists	9.81^{ab}	8.75^{bcd}	5.88^{e}	4.06^{gh}	11.13^{ab}	4.81^{g}	7.88^{de}	2.06^{h}
STANDARD: Theft								
Idealistic-absolutists	9.19^{abc}	8.63^{bc}	4.63^{def}	3.75^{efg}	10.12^{ab}	6.94^{e}	7.82^{de}	2.81^{f}
Pragmatic-absolutists	10.63^{a}	10.06^{ab}	3.56^{efg}	2.63^{fg}	10.69^{a}	6.75^{e}	6.88^{e}	2.68^{f}
Pragmatic-relativists	8.75^{bc}	8.13^{c}	5.69^{d}	3.19^{fg}	9.94^{abc}	6.81^{e}	8.50^{cd}	2.38^{f}
Idealistic-relativists	9.63^{abc}	9.63^{abc}	5.06^{de}	3.56^{efg}	10.25^{ab}	6.88^{e}	8.94^{bcd}	2.25^{f}

Note: The greater the score, the more the attribution of morality. Within each Standard of Morality, means without a single common subscript differ at the $p = .05$ level.

Figure 6-3

The Effects of Ethical Ideology, Outcome Magnitude, Outcome Quality, and Consistency with Standards of Morality on Attributions of Morality


POSITIVE-STANDARD-CONSISTENT
NEGATIVE-STANDARD-CONSISTENT
POSITIVE-STANDARD-INCONSISTENT
NEGATIVE-STANDARD-INCONSISTENT
LOW MAGNITUDE
HIGH MAGNITUDE
LIE
ATTRIBUTION OF MORALITY
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
P-A
I-A
P-R
I-R
LOW MAGNITUDE
HIGH MAGNITUDE
PROMISE
ATTRIBUTION OF MORALITY

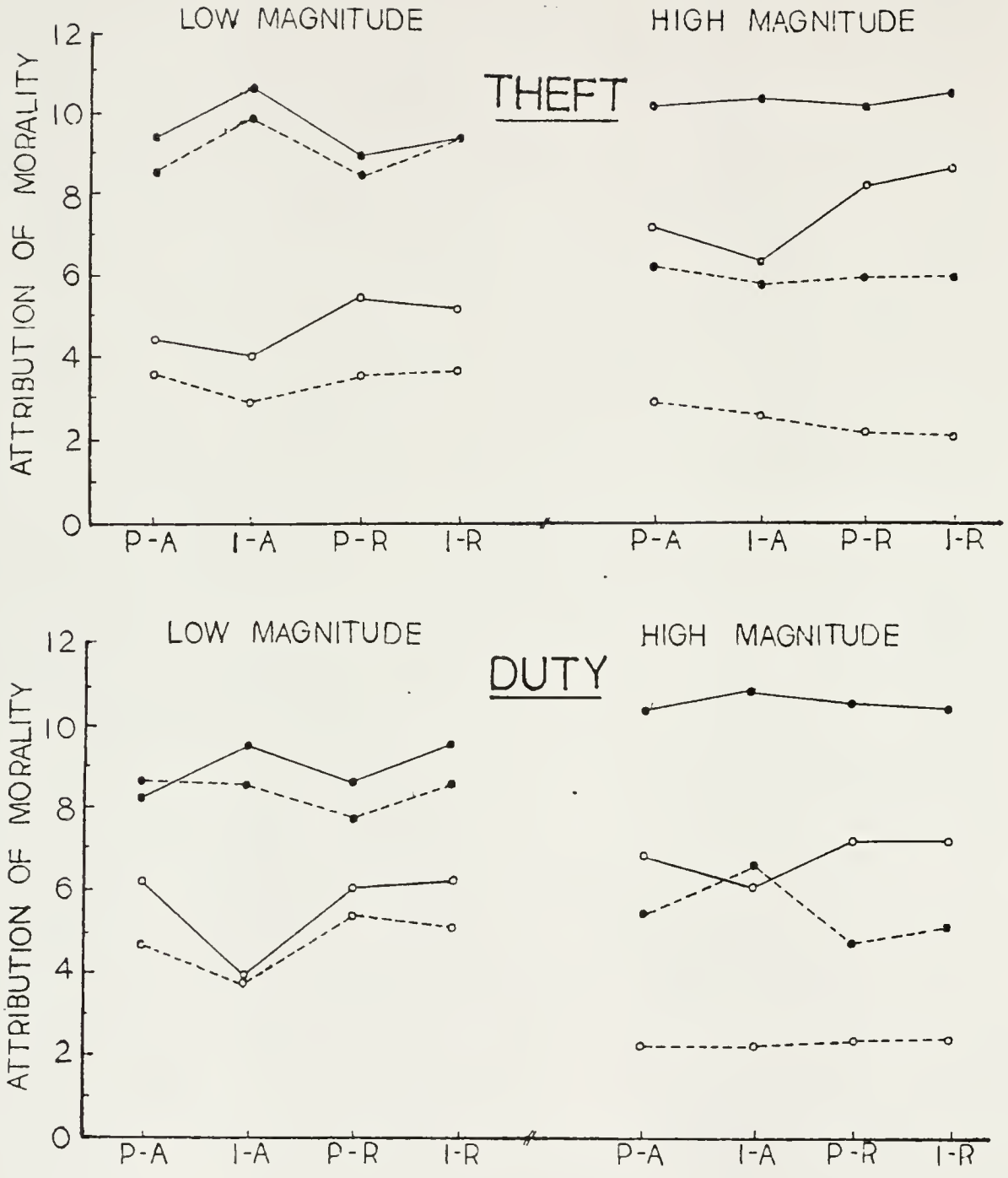


Figure 6-3 (continued)

attributed greater morality to the individual if his action was compatible with a moral standard, while pragmatic-relativists were the least influenced by the action's compatibility with a moral standard. For example, when an individual who did not steal or kept a promise produced a positive outcome, idealistic-absolutists attributed a greater degree of morality than did pragmatic-relativists. Similarly, when the individual did not steal or tell a lie and this led to negative consequences, idealistic-absolutists continued to be more positive in their moral judgments than pragmatic-relativists (and, in the case of lying, more positive than pragmatic-absolutists). If, on the other hand, the individual produced a positive outcome by stealing, lying, or not fulfilling a duty, pragmatic-relativists were more positive in their attributions of morality than were idealistic-absolutists. In fact, idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality in the positive consequence/lie condition than both idealistic and pragmatic-relativists, and less morality in the positive consequences/failure of duty condition than all other ethical attributors. Lastly, pragmatic-relativists attributed more morality to the individual whose lie produced negative consequences than did idealistic-absolutists.

Although consistency of an action with a moral standard was very important when the consequences were mild, when consequences were higher in magnitude, consistency became less influential. Regardless of the action's consistency with a moral standard, highly positive outcomes led to more favorable attributions of morality than highly negative outcomes. If equated on outcome quality, however, absolutists did rate the actor whose behavior was consistent to be more moral than the

individual who violated a moral standard. Relativists, on the other hand, were less directly influenced by the consistency of the action with a standard. For example, if the outcome was positive, both pragmatic and idealistic-relativists rated the actor who stole and the actor who did not steal to be equally moral. Conversely, when the outcome was negative, relativists attributed an equal degree of morality to the actor who broke a promise as one who kept a promise. Lastly, pragmatic-relativists considered the liar who produced positive consequences to be as moral as the truth-teller who produced positive consequences.

Because of the strength of the consequences, attribution of morality after a violation of a moral standard were frequently mitigated by the quality of the consequences. However, the degree to which attributions were qualified by the outcome depended upon the ethical ideology of the attributor, as predicted by Hypothesis III. When the standard dealt with theft, promises, or duty, idealistic-absolutists attributed an equal amount of morality to actors who (1) produced a positive outcome but violated a moral standard and (2) produced a negative outcome but were consistent with a standard. For pragmatic-absolutists, this justification of standard inconsistency extended to lies and telling the truth as well. In general, the effects of the outcome on morality attributions were even stronger for relativists. In each case, pragmatic-relativists attributed more morality to the actor who produced a positive outcome by violating a moral standard than the actor who produced a negative outcome by acting consistently with a standard. This effect also held for idealistic-relativists when the standard concerned theft, promises, and lying, and for pragmatic-absolutists

when promises were involved. Lastly, whether or not the individual was keeping or breaking a promise did not influence relativists' judgments when the outcome was negative. Both idealistic and pragmatic relativists attributed equal amounts of morality to the actor who produced negative consequences by keeping a promise as the actor who caused negative consequences by breaking a promise.

Finally, differences between idealistic-absolutists and those subjects who endorsed the other ethical ideologies were again apparent on each of the four standards. Supporting Hypothesis IIIA, when evaluating the individual who stole or lied to get positive consequences, idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality than relativists (and pragmatic-absolutists as well when the actor lied). Supporting Hypothesis IIIB, when the actor produced negative consequences by acting consistently with a moral standard, (1) relativists were more negative than idealistic-absolutists when the actor was keeping a promise, (2) pragmatic-relativists were more negative than idealistic-absolutists when the actor did his duty, and (3) relativists were more negative than absolutists when the actor told the truth. Lastly, pragmatic-absolutists were less favorable than idealistic-absolutists when the actor produced a positive outcome by telling the truth.

Sex differences. The three-way interaction of ethical ideology, sex of subject, and standard-consistency qualified a lower order sex X consistency interaction. Examination of the means for the interaction, which are presented in Table 6-13, indicates that irrespective of subject sex and ethical ideology, individuals whose actions were consistent with standard of morality were more favorably evaluated than those whose actions were inconsistent. However, this difference due

Table 6-13

The Effects of Consistency with Standards on Males and Females Attributions of Morality

	Standard Consistency	Pragmatic-absolutists	Idealistic-absolutists	Pragmatic relativists	Idealistic-relativists
Males	Inconsistent	5.52^{c}	5.18^{c}	5.38^{c}	5.06^{c}
	Consistent	7.66^{b}	8.56^{ab}	7.88^{b}	8.96^{ab}
Females	Inconsistent	4.63^{c}	3.07^{d}	5.39^{c}	5.11^{c}
	Consistent	9.38^{ab}	10.03^{a}	8.42^{b}	8.55^{ab}

Note: The higher the score, the greater the attribution of morality. Means without a single common subscript differ at the $\underline{p} = .05$ level.

to standard-consistency was most pronounced for female idealistic-absolutists. In addition, female idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality to the standard inconsistent actor than did subjects in all the other ethical ideologies.

Experiment III: Summary of Results

Of the several major conclusions suggested by the results of Experiment III, one of the most important concerns the interrelationships among attribution of responsibility, attribution of morality, and the moral normativeness of the behavior. Overall, actions which traditionally are considered to be inconsistent with moral standards such as lying, stealing, and breaking a promise were evaluated by subjects as less compatible with norms of morality. More importantly, however, the actor who produced these norm-incompatible actions was usually perceived to be less moral than the individual who followed the norm.

The evaluation of an action and attribution of morality did not depend solely on the compatibility of the action with moral standards; however, and the results of this experiment also highlight the impact of the consequences of an action on attributions. Both when evaluating the consistency of an action with a standard and when attributing morality, subjects preferred actions with higly positive outcomes, then slightly positive outcomes, slightly negative outcomes, and highly negative outcomes. In fact, attributions of morality were often tempered by the quality of the consequences which followed the action. Overall, when a norm-following actor produced a negative outcome, he was rated as less moral than an actor who produced a positive outcome by violating a norm,

particularly if highly valenced outcomes were involved. Thus, the consequence can qualify judgments made about an actor.

Although many differences were obtained among the four different standards used in the experiment, one of the most reliably obtained effects emphasized the gap between stealing and the other three standards. On evaluations of action consistency, attribution of responsibility, and attribution of morality, theft was rated more negatively than any other norm-incompatible behavior. Thus stealing, particularly when it led to high negative outcomes, was viewed as more incompatible with standards of morality than lying, breaking a promise, and failing to do a duty. Also, (1) stealing to produce negative consequences led to less moral attribution than the other negative-consequence-producing norm violations, and (2) the actor who refused to steal despite the fact that doing so caused a negative consequence was more favorably evaluated than actors who, in conforming to one of the other norms, produced negative consequences.

Lastly, attributions of morality supported the predictions advanced concerning attributional divergencies among judges who endorsed different ethical ideologies. While all subjects attributed less morality to the individual who violated a moral standard than one who conformed to moral norms, this effect was most pronounced for idealistic-absolutists. Also, idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality to the norm violator than all other attributors. Finally, idealistic-absolutists -- particularly when contrasted with pragmatic-relativists -- were least likely to be influenced by the quality of the consequences when evaluating standard consistent and inconsistent behavior. Depending upon the

specific moral standard in question, idealistic-absolutists attributed greater morality to actors who produced negative consequences by following moral norms than did relativists. Conversely, in comparison to relativists, idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality to actors who violated a moral standard in order to achieve a positive outcome.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The three experiments conducted examined several factors that influence the moral evaluations individuals formulate about other people. Adopting an attribution perspective, the framework which guided the research suggested that two elements -- the evaluations of an action and the actor's responsibility for the act -- are extremely important characteristics of the situation which affect morality attributions. However, the model also posited that the degree to which the individual is influenced by these situational factors depends to some extent on the ethical ideology he or she adopts.

Several general conclusions about moral attribution can be drawn from the results of the research. Essentially, the theory of moral attribution suggests that the evaluation of action and hence, attribution of morality, is primarily determined by the consequences which follow as a result of the action as well as the compatibility of the action with society's moral norms or rules. Supporting this proposition, across all three experiments a clear relationship was found between evaluations of the quality of the consequences of the action and attributions about the actor. As the third experiment demonstrated, the more negative the consequences, then the less favorably the action and actor were perceived. Conversely, as the consequences became more positive, the evaluation of the act and actor also became more favorable. This impact of consequences

on attributions was also observed when both good and bad outcomes resulted from a single behavior.

The consistency of an action with a standard of morality influenced evaluations of actions and attributions of morality as well. Overall, actions which violated a moral standard such as lies, thefts, and broken promises, were evaluated more negatively and led to less favorable attributions of morality than actions which were consistent with moral standards. The degree of condemnation which followed the violation of a moral standard, however, was in some instances dependent upon quality of the consequences which the action produced. Thus, attributions about a particular action were partially "qualified" by the consequences of that action. Positive outcomes served to lessen blame for violating a standard or enhanced praise for conforming to a norm, and negative outcomes led to a reduction in attributed morality after both violations and conformity. Thus, irrespective of whether the standard dealt with lies, promises, stealing, or duties, standard-inconsistent actions which resulted in highly positive outcomes were more favorably evaluated than standard-consistent actions which led to highly negative outcomes.

In addition to illuminating the impact of consequences and consistency-with-norms information on the evaluation of action and attributed morality, the responsibility of the actor was also found to play a part in the moral judgment process. After all, if an actor is not responsible for his or her actions, then they do not provide the perceiver with a great deal of attributionally useful data. Experiment II supported this contention, finding that attributions of morality to a person depended on the degree to which that person was responsible for the behavior and its outcomes. First, if the actor was merely

associated with an action -- for example, someone he knew performed a morally evaluable action but he himself knew nothing about the event -- then the quality of the event and outcome did not influence attributions; the actor associated with a negative outcome was judged to be as moral as the actor associated with a positive outcome. If, on the other hand, the individual in a very direct way caused the event -- for example, the person, completely unknowingly and unintentionally harmed someone else -- then more morality was attributed to the actor after a negative outcome rather than a positive one. This effect, which parallels a similar difference found for attributions of responsibility (cf. Shaw & Sulzer, 1964), suggests that attributors may be attempting to indicate by enhanced attributions of morality that the actor who caused the negative outcome should not be blamed for the consequences. Lastly, when the actor was responsible for an outcome which he either foresaw, intended, or produced under some environmental pressure, positive outcomes led to greater attribution of morality than negative outcomes, reaching a peak when the actor intended to produce the outcome. Overall, the premise that attribution of responsibility is inversely related to attribution of morality for negative outcomes but directly related to attribution of morality after positive outcomes was supported.

More specific predictions concerning moral attribution processes were made possible when the ethical ideology of the attributor was taken into account. Following the classification system suggested by Schlenker and Forsyth (1977), the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) was developed to measure individuals' degree of idealism and acceptance

of universal moral principles.[3] The two resulting scales, which unlike those utilized by Schlenker and Forsyth were not specific to judgments of psychological research, were found to have adequate internal consistency, were moderately reliable over time, were not correlated with a measure of social desirability, and correlated significantly with the corresponding Schlenker-Forsyth ethical ideology measures. Also, neither the idealism scale nor the rule-universalism scale were related to a measure of Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning (Rest et al., 1974), suggesting that the two conceptualizations of individual differences in moral reasoning are focusing on different things. In contrast to Kohlberg's model, the EPQ does not classify ethical ideologies solely on the basis of their "principledness," and therefore recommends itself as a more general typology. In addition, since the model is not developmentally-rooted, the idealism/rule-universalism classification may be more usefully applied than Kohlberg's model when the focus is on the moral judgments of adults. The rule-universalism scale was, however,

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[3] A third factor pertaining to willingness to generalize one's moral judgments to others was suggested during the exploratory stages of the research. While a three-item scale measuring generality was included on the EPQ, the three experiments conducted did not directly examine the effects of this variable on moral attributions. However, by separating low and high scorers on the generality measure via a median split, it was possible to see if any systematic differences in the attribution of morality made by these two groups occurred in any of the three experiments. In Experiment II, degree of generality of judgments interacted with level of actor's responsibility; F (4, 224) = 2.73, $p < .05$. Examination of the means shows that high and low generality judges differed only when evaluating level 5 situations; in this single instance, subjects who reported they were less likely to generalize their judgments to others attributed less morality to the actor than did high generality subjects. The means were 7.2 and 8.7, respectively. No other effects of the generality variable were obtained in this or any of the other experiments.

correlated significantly with Hogan's (1973) Survey of Ethical Attitudes. Since the SEA measures degree of belief in the morality of existing laws versus a belief in a higher morality, this correlation provides concensual validation for the rule-universalism scale.

Subjects who endorsed the four different ethical ideologies measured by the EPQ -- idealistic-absolutists, pragmatic-absolutists, idealistic-relativists, and pragmatic-relativists -- differed in their emphasis of good and bad consequences, overall magnitude of moral attribution, as well as openness to justifications. In the first experiment, which examined attributions of morality to an actor whose behavior resulted in both positive and negative consequences, pragmatic-absolutists' attributions of morality were more closely related to the positive consequences of the action while idealistic-relativists' judgments were significantly related to evaluations of both the positive and negative consequences. Unexpectedly, this equal emphasis of both positive and negative consequences did not hold for pragmatic-relativists. These attributors' judgments, unlike those of their idealistic counterparts, were more closely related to the negative consequences of the action rather than the positive. The attributions of idealistic-absolutists were similarly disconfirming since their attributions of morality were correlated with neither the evaluation of positive consequences nor the evaluation of negative consequences.

The four ethical types also differed in the amount of morality which they attributed to others. Overall, idealistic-absolutists tended to be the most negative in their attributions, pragmatic-absolutists were the most positive, while relativists fell intermediate. In addition, idealistic-absolutists, as compared to the attributors who endorsed the

other ethical ideologies, were less likely to excuse the violation of a moral principle and were more likely to praise rigid conformity to one. For example, idealistic-absolutists attributed less morality to a liar who produced positive consequences than did relativists and pragmatic-absolutists. Conversely, idealistic-absolutists were more favorable than relativists when evaluating an individual who, in keeping a promise, produced a negative outcome.

In general, individuals who endorse the different ethical ideologies are influenced by different types of information when they make moral attributions. Idealistic-absolutists' attributions after negative or mixed outcomes were consistently more negative than the attributions of the other judges, and they were less likely to allow the consequences of an action to justify the violation of a moral standard. Several possible causes may underlie this negativity. First, as the results of Schlenker and Forsyth (1977) suggest, this effect may be due to idealistic-absolutists' tendency to emphasize the negative consequences rather than the positive. This explanation was not, however, supported by Experiment I. Second, idealistic-absolutists may take a dimmer view of negative consequences than do the other attributors. In the first experiment it was the idealistic-absolutists who evaluated negative consequences less favorably than the other attributors. Lastly, and as would be consistent with the underlying philosophical assumptions of the position, idealistic-absolutists may be more influenced by the consistency of the action with moral standards than by consequence information. As the third experiment showed, idealistic-absolutists were more likely to condemn norm-inconsistent behavior while condoning norm-consistent behavior.

Pragmatic-absolutists, on the other hand, were consistently the most positive in their attributions of morality. In explanation, the pragmatic-absolutists' orientation towards moral judgment may decrease the "surprise" value of the negative consequences which sometimes arise from actions, so that they are not heavily emphasized when moral attributions are being formulated. As both Schlenker and Forsyth's results and the first experiment suggest, pragmatic-absolutists thus emphasize positve consequences more than negative when making moral attributions.

Pragmatic-relativists, like pragmatic-absolutists, are more practical in their approach to ethical issues, and they also tended to evaluate the actor more positively than the more idealistic judges (See Experiment II, for example). However, this tendency towards greater favorability in judgments cannot be due to increased emphasis of positive consequences over negative; the first experiment found that their evaluations of negative consequences were significantly correlated with attributions, not positive ones. Instead, the heightened favorability of pragmatic-relativists' evaluations may be due to their tendency to evaluate negative consequences more favorably than the idealistic attributors. Second, as relativists, pragmatic-relativists are less influenced by the compatibility of the act with norms of morality. As the third experiment demonstrated, when the outcomes were highly valenced the pragmatic-relativists were more influenced by quality of the consequences than by the consistency of the action with moral standards.

In several ways the patterns of attributions evidenced by idealistic-relativists are the most intriguing. First, only

idealistic-relativists' attributions were significantly correlated with evaluations of both positive and negative outcomes. Second, a high degree of consistent condemnation was found in these judges' evaluations of extremely negative actions, and these judgments were completely uninfluenced by the actor's level of responsibility for the outcome produced. Third, idealistic-relativists did not accept the excuse of self-defense when it resulted in highly negative outcomes -- the death of the aggressor. In this instance they were more negative in their evaluations of the actor than were all other ethical attributors. Lastly, like pragmatic-relativists, idealistic-relativists' attributions of morality were tempered by the quality of the consequences produced by the action so that they blamed an actor who violated a moral norm less when he produced a good outcome by doing so. Apparently, the idealistic-relativist, whose ideology emphasizes high-sounding, difficult to fulfill goals while at the same time not recommending the application of rigid rules, recognizes that in many instances these desirable but difficult to attain ends cannot be reached.

In conclusion, the results of this investigation supported the suggested attributional explanation of moral evaluations, thus recommending the model as a useful perspective for the further study of moral evaluations. Because this research represents only an initial step towards a full understanding of moral attribution, future research is needed to further clarify the effects of other characteristics of the situation and attributors on moral judgments. For example, such questions as "How does information about the actor's motives influence judgments?" "What factors justify breaking moral norms?" and "What is

the relationship between moral attribution and sanctioning?" still need to be answered. Further, while the characteristics of individuals who endorse the different ethical ideologies are becoming increasingly clear, several puzzles still stand in the way of a full understanding of the differences between these groups. For example, it is unclear why idealistic-relativists were so strongly opposed to excessively violent self-defense, or why idealistic-absolutists' attributions were not found to be related to the evaluations of consequences. Additional research is needed to clarify the typical characteristics of individuals who endorse the different ethical ideologies, more fully describe the impact of ideology on moral judgments, and also extend these judgmental differences to behavioral variations.

Despite the relevance of moral evaluations to an understanding of many different kinds of interpersonal behaviors, relatively little research has been done specifically examining moral judgment processes. One assumption that has probably contributed to this dearth suggests that most moral judgment processes are neither transituational nor transpersonal. Thus, it is assumed that an ideographic approach to judgments is necessary since detailed information about the ethical system the attributor personally adopts is required to make any predictions, and that each situation is unique and must be evaluated apart from others. The results of the current investigation suggest, however, that despite the complexity of the relations which lock the many variables relevant to moral attribution together, general statements about ethical judgments can be posited and tested. While some effects, such as the greater condemnation of thefts and the greater praise of the mercy-killing situation suggest that certain unique characteristics of a

given situation or moral norm may influence judgments, the reported effects of quality of consequences, responsibility, and consistency of actions with standards were robust and unqualified by the specific characteristics of the situation or the moral attributor. Thus, these results argue that the area of moral judgment can be successfully handled empirically and recommend the topic for further study by psychologists who are interested in understanding the attributional bases of ethical decisions.

APPENDIX A

ORIGINAL ETHICS POSITION QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1: Items Included on the Original Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ1)

RULE-UNIVERSALISM SUBSCALE

* 1. It is possible to develop rigid codes of ethics that can be applied without exception to all psychological studies.

* 2. Codes of ethics should serve as rigid requirements that all investigators are bound to obey, irrespective of the nature or demands of a particular study.

3. Rigid ethical codes for research cannot be formulated since there are always possible exceptions that can arise that would require bending the rules.

4. Codes of ethics can be formulated, but must remain flexible so that exceptions can be made in special circumstances.

5. Rigid codifying an ethical position that prevents certain types of research could stand in the way of scientific advancement and prevent the accumulation of knowledge.

* 6. Participants should always be told the complete truth about every facet of an experiment before they participate.

7. The application of a particular code of ethics depends entirely upon the particular study; what is appropriate in one study might be totally inappropriate in another.

8. Any code of research ethics should serve only as a series of flexible rules and should not be expected to apply in any and all situations.

* 9. Lying to participants about the nature of a study is always wrong, irrespective of the type of study or the amount of information to be gained.

10. Deception should be permitted in research since it is sometimes necessary to test certain scientific hypotheses.

*11. If a study embarrasses participants, it should not be conducted, even if the study in no other way harms the participants.

12. Since the consequences of research often determine how ethical the study is seen by people, it is difficult to decide in advance whether studies should or should not be done.

13. What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another.

IDEALISM-PRAGMATISM SUBSCALE

14. If a researcher can foresee any type of harm, no matter how small, physical or psychological, he or she should not conduct the study.

15. Risks to subjects should never be permitted, irrespective of how important a study may seem to a researcher, or how small the risks.

16. When one weighs the potential benefits from research against the potential harm to participants, it could lead to sacrificing the participants' welfare and hence is wrong.

17. The existence of potential harm to participants is always wront, irrespective of the amount that could be learned from the study.

18. Participants must emerge from a research project unharmed in any way, physically or psychologically; if this cannot be guaranteed in advance, the study should not be done.

*19. It is sometimes necessary to sacrifice the welfare of participants when conducting important research projects.

*20. Scientific concerns sometimes justify potential harm to participants.

21. The dignity and welfare of people is the most important concern in any society.

22. The amount of physical harm that could potentially occur to participants.

23. The amount of psychological harm that could potentially occur to participants.

24. The ability to obtain informed consent from participants; that is, whether the study allows participants to freely decide whether or not they wish to participate.

25. The degree to which the research might advance science.

26. The degree to which the research might increase our understanding of human behavior.

27. The degree to which the study could threaten the dignity and welfare of the participants; e.g., threaten their self-respect.

Note: Starred items (1, 2, 6, 9, 11, 19, and 20) are reverse scored. Degree of agreement is assessed for items 1 through 21. Degree of importance as a consideration to take into account in evaluating a psychological study is assessed for items 22 through 27.

[Source: Schlenker and Forsyth, 1977]

Part 2: Items for the Initial EPQ Scale Revision

ITEM[a] NUMBER	ITEM	Correlations with scale totals	
IDEALISM-PRAGMATISM ITEMS		IDEALISM	UNIVERSALISM
° 1.	A person should make certain that their actions never intentionally harm another, even to a small degree.	+.60	+.22
° 2.	Risks to another should never be tolerated, irrespective of how small the risks might be.	+.60	+.01
° 3.	The existence of potential harm to others is always wrong, irrespective of the benefits to be gained.	+.63	+.11
°* 4.	It is sometimes necessary to sacrifice the welfare of others in certain interpersonal interactions.	+.41	+.22
* 5.	Personal concerns sometimes justify potential harm to others.	+.28	-.09
6.	If a person keeps in mind the basic idea that one should "love one's neighbor," any action that he or she does should be acceptable.	+.26	+.16
° 7.[b]	The dignity and welfare of people is the most important concern in any society.	+.38	-.12
*.	Although I use my moral principles to judge my own actions, I don't use my principles in making judgments of others.	+.13	+.35
9.	A person who performs a good action for some immoral reason is acting immorally.	+.15	+.28
10.	I would not condemn another who performs an action which violates one of my moral rules if the doer of the act thinks that he is acting morally.	-.19	+.21
11.	Strict adherence to moral principles will result in a society gaining the highest levels of excellence and perfection.	+.43	+.48

12.	Anyone can be happy if they want to be.	+.25	+.03
° 13.	One should never psychologically or physically harm another person.	+.76	_.30
° 14.	One should not perform an action which might in any way threaten the dignity and welfare of another individual	+.75	+.27
° 15.	If an action could harm an innocent other, then it should not be done.	+.59	-.15
° 16.	Lying to others is never justified.	+.38	+.11
*17.	The practical implications of an action must be taken into account when judging the morality of that action.	+.18	+.29
° 18.	The compatibility of the action with ideas of what is the "best" or most "perfect" kind of behavior must be taken into account when judging actions.	+.45	+.03
°*19.	The positive or negative consequences of an action are the only considerations that are important to moral judgment; whether or not the action violates some abstract moral principle is irrelevant.	+.15	+.34
20.	If one makes certain to always try to "do one's duty," then he or she can be certain that they will always be acting morally.	+.33	+.16
° 21.	An action which will produce some bad consequences is moral provided it produces some good consequences which obviously outweigh the bad.	+.09	-.09
° 22.	Whether an action produces good consequences or bad consequences is irrelevant to moral judgment; what is important is whether the person was trying to produce a good outcome rather than a bad one.	+.31	-.02
23.	In moral judgment, a person's motives and intentions are more important than the consequences produced by their actions.	+.37	+.17

° 24.	Conduct should be judged as good or bad depending upon the consequences it produces.	+.17	-.07
° 25.	Balancing the positive consequences against the negative consequences of an action can result in a person performing an action which will harm others to get positive consequences and hence is immoral.	+.41	-.00
°*26.	A failure to rely on the consequences of an action in making moral judgments is immoral since it may result in a person not performing an action that will produce many positive consequences simply because it may violate some principle.	+.21	-.02

RULE-UNIVERSALISM ITEMS

*27.	Ethical codes for interpersonal relations cannot be formulated since there would always be possible exceptions that can arise that would require breaking the rules.	-.16	+.41
28.	Codes of ethics should serve as requirements that all people are bound to obey, irrespective of the nature or demands of a particular situation.	+.17	+.44
29.	It is possible to develop codes of ethics that can be applied to all situations without exception.	+.05	+.40
30.	Since telling a lie breaks a moral principle, people should always tell the truth.	+.44	+.36
*31.	The application of a particular code of ethics depends entirely upon the particular situation and the individuals involved; what is appropriate in one situation might be totally inappropriate in another.	-.03	+.38
32.	Lying to other people is wrong, irrespective of the situation or the positive outcomes to be gained.	+.46	+.42

°*33.	What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another.	+.14	+.61
°*34.	Moral standards should be seen as being individualistic; what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person.	+.13	+.48
*35.	There is great diversity in moral principles.	+.10	+.33
°*36.	Different types of moralities cannot be compared as to "rightness;" what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person.	+.23	+.51
°*37.	Questions of what is moral behavior can never be resolved since what is moral or immoral is up to the individual.	+.11	+.61
°*38.	Moral standards are simply personal rules which indicate how a person should behave, and are not to be applied in making judgments of others.	+.00	+.47
*39.	Any action which the society labels as moral is moral and ought to be done.	-.32	-.46
40.	The essence of moral behavior lies in doing one's duty.	+.26	+.50
41.	People should make certain that their conduct is always in accord with moral principles.	+.23	+.40
42.	It is wrong to lie to others.	+.27	+.53
°*43.	Whether or not a lie is judged to be moral or immoral depends upon the circumstances surrounding the action.	+.12	+.48
°*44.[c]	There are no fundamental moral principles of right and wrong that can be applied to interpersonal relations.	+.09	+.35
°*45.	Ethical considerations in interpersonal relations are so complex that individuals should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes.	.00	+.52

46.	There are some ethical principles that are so important that no exceptions should ever be made to them.	+.57	+.42
*47.	There are no ethical principles that are so important that no exceptions should ever be made to them.	+.43	+.43
°*48.	Rigidly codifying an ethical position that prevents certain types of actions could stand in the way of bettering human relations and adjustment.	+.24	+.48
° 49.	It is possible to develop codes of ethics that can be applied to nearly all situations.	+.07	+.39
*50.	Universal moral rules do not exist.	+.05	+.43
51.	The ultimate question of ethics is whether some action is compatible with universal principles which define which behaviors are moral and which immoral.	+.22	+.22
*52.	Whether or not a person should be told the complete truth depends on the situation.	-.10	+.31
°*53.	No rule concerning lying can be formulated; whether or not a lie is permissible or not permissible totally depends upon the situation.	+.13	+.50
*54.	Others actions should not be judged.	-.27	+.12
*55.	It is impossible to resolve moral issues through either reason or evidence.	-.19	+.22

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[a] *items were reverse scored.
°items were retained after the initial factor and item analysis.

[b] This item was retained but reworded to state: "The dignity and welfare of people should be the most important concern in any society."

[c] This item was retained but reworded to state: "There are some ethical principles which are so important that they should be a part of any code of ethics."

APPENDIX B

EXPERIMENT I

Part 1: Situations Used in Experiment I.

Story One: Mercy-killing

A doctor in a large metropolitan hospital had a patient that was slowly dying of a disease that could not be cured. The patient was in terrible pain because of the disease, but was so weak that the administration of any kind of pain-killer would have made her die. She was delirious and almost crazy with pain, but in her calm periods she asked the doctor to give her enough of a drug that would kill her. She said she couldn't stand the pain and was going to die in a few months anyway. The doctor thought about it, and then decided to give her the drug. She died within hours of the administration.

Many different outcomes occurred because the doctor gave the patient the drug. The patient did have to suffer much less, but she also did not live as long as she could have. The medical bills the family had to pay were greatly reduced, but the doctor had violated his oath to only save lives. Also, while her sister, who was unprepared for the sudden death, was greatly upset psychologically, the sudden death spared the husband the trauma of having to watch his wife slowly and painfully die.

Story Two: Friend visiting a patient

Pat was at the hospital visiting Dale, a friend who had just had an operation. Before Pat was permitted to see Dale, she had to talk to Dale's physician. The doctor explained that some complications had arisen as a result of the operation, and that Dale's chances of recovery had diminished. The doctor told Pat to only talk about topics unrelated to the illness since it was important that Dale not know how serious the operation was. The doctor explained that telling Dale about his chances would only depress him, but that misleading him about his chances might give him false hope that could hurt his chances for survival even more.

Pat went to Dale's room and they spoke for a short while. Eventually Dale told Pat that he had asked the doctors and nurses about how serious his condition was, but that they only answered in vague medical terms that didn't make much sense to Dale. So Dale wanted to know if Pat knew anything about the case, and what Pat thought Dale's chances were. Ignoring the doctor's warning, Pat told Dale, "I don't think it is very serious, and I am sure that you will be up and around in a couple of days."

Many different outcomes occurred because Pat told Dale his illness was not serious. Dale did feel less worried about the illness, but he also began to argue with the nurses about taking his medicine -- he didn't think it was necessary since he wasn't as sick as he thought. Also, he stopped feeling sorry for himself, but twice he tried to get out of bed (thinking he wasn't that sick) and worsened his condition. Lastly, he did begin to eat better, but he refused to have a second operation the doctors thought was necessary since he didn't think he was very sick.

Story Three: The psychology experiment

A psychologist was interested in studying why people help in certain kinds of emergency situations, so he staged an accident outside a busy shopping center. He had a confederate appear to take a serious fall, and then recorded the amount of time it took bystanders to help while manipulating several other variables. Because of the research, the psychologist was able to gain additional information that was important scientifically. However, some of the subjects in the study were upset by the experience. Also, some very useful practical information was gained concerning what conditions determine when people help, but the privacy of the subjects in the experiment had been invaded. Lastly, the experience helped many of the subjects gain insight into their own feelings, but at the same time some of the subjects felt very depressed about having been deceived.

Story Four: The research director

Jean was associated with a firm that did research work for the government and private industry. Jean had been working for some time on a project that was being conducted for the U.S. Department of Education. The project was investigating some of the determinants of children's successfulness in learning to read at an early age, and had been going on for several years with a substantial amount of money being spent on the project to get some answers to the hypotheses which the Department had posed.

One day Jean was attending a meeting with the director of the Department which was sponsoring the project. The meeting was drawing to a close and the sponsor seemed satisfied with the progress that was being made with the project. The director then asked Jean about one of the most important questions the project was trying to answer, and wanted to know how close they were in getting some conclusive information on the question. Jean had been working on a phase of the project that was quite relevant to the question the director asked, and knew that little progress had been made in the area. Jean was familiar with the problem and felt that, as things now stood, it would be some time before the problem would be solved. However, while Jean did not actually think that the problem would be solved in the near future, she felt that the project would be able to solve many other scientific and practical problems. It did occur to Jean that some other project might have better success attacking the problem the director specifically posed, and that the time

lost by continuing with the project might have a negative effect on the education of some children, but Jean decided to say "I think we will soon have the answer."

The director believed Jean and as a consequence, several things happened. The meeting ended without any embarrassment, but since funds were limited Jean's project received money while other research (which would have dealt more successfully with the problem) did not. Also, while the research project did solve a number of important scientific problems, funds ear-marked for applied teaching projects designed to help children read better were diverted to the research project. Lastly, the research project did solve a number of practical problems, but the education of many school children suffered since the important question remained unanswered for several years.

Part 2: Dependent Measures Used in Experiment I

[Note: Each of the items were tailored to the specific story the subject was evaluating. The following measures were those used for Story Three, and the questions for the other stories followed a similar format.]

Answer the questions by placing an X somewhere along the line between the dots.

1. How good or bad do you personally think it is that:

   a. the psychologist was able to gain additional information that was important scientifically.

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely good good neither bad extremely bad

   b. some of the subjects in the study were upset.

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely good good neither bad extremely bad

   c. some very useful practical information was gained.

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely good good neither bad extremely bad

   d. the privacy of the subjects in the experiment was invaded.

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely good good neither bad extremely bad

e. the experience helped many of the subjects gain insight into their own feelings.

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely good good neither bad extremely bad

f. subjects felt very depressed about having been deceived.

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely good good neither bad extremely bad

2. How moral do you feel the psychologist was?

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely moral moral neither moral nor immoral immoral extremely immoral

3. How moral do you feel the psychologist's action was?

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely moral moral neither moral nor immoral immoral extremely immoral

4. Weighting the human values involved, do you feel that the psychologist should have done what he did?

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
definitely should not have been done undecided definitely should have been done

5. To what degree to you think the reason or motive behind the psychologist's action was good vs. bad?

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely bad bad neither good nor bad good extremely good

6. Overall, how do you personally evaluate the consequences which followed the psychologist's actions?

:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:
extremely good good neither good nor bad bad extremely bad

7. In general, how responsible was the psychologist for the outcomes which followed his action?

completely responsible	very responsible	somewhat responsible	slightly responsible	not at all responsible

APPENDIX B

EXPERIMENT II

Part 1: Situations Used in Experiment II

1. One day when Perry was at the dentist's office, the boys in his class went swimming. While there, they saved a little boy from drowning. (Level I, Positive Outcome)

2. One day, after Perry had gone home from school, the boys in his class pulled a small child from the path of a speeding automobile. (Level I, Positive Outcome)

3. One day after Perry had gone home from school some other boys in his class stabbed a child to death. (Level I, Negative Outcome)

4. Perry had been playing with classmates in a tree. While he was home for lunch, some of the boys decided to kill another boy. They pushed him out of the tree and his neck was broken. (Level I, Negative Outcome)

5. A child had fallen into a swimming pool and was drowning. Perry didn't know the child was in the pool, but just at that time he was draining the pool so he could clean it. The water ran out quickly and the child's life was saved. (Level II, Positive Outcome)

6. Perry was making telephone calls to several of his friends. When the phone rang in one home he called, it awakened a man who was sleeping near a broken gas stove. If he had not awakened, the leaking gas would have killed him. (Level II, Positive Outcome)

7. Perry told some people about a short-cut to the next town. They took the short-cut but as they were crossing a river the bridge broke. Their car fell into the river and the people were drowned. (Level II, Negative Outcome)

8. Perry called a boy and asked him to come over to his house to see his birthday presents. On the way to Perry's house the boy was struck by a car and was killed. (Level II, Negative Outcome)

9. Perry woke up in the middle of the night and saw that the house next door was on fire. He was frightened and woke up his father to ask him if he could sleep in his parents' room. His father ran to the house and saved two old people who were trapped in the burning house.
(Level III, Positive Outcome)

10. Perry was taking his little sister to school. She started to step into a busy street but Perry wanted to look in a store window, so he pulled her back. This kept his sister from being hit by a car.
(Level III, Positive Outcome)

11. Perry was playing with some bricks on the roof of his father's garage. When he was tired of playing with the bricks, he began tossing them down to the sidewalk. A woman coming down the sidewalk was struck on the head and killed by one of the falling bricks.
(Level III, Negative Outcome)

12. Perry had an old bicycle which had no brakes. He told his sister to ride it to the store several blocks away. When she came to a busy street, she could not stop the bicycle and ran into the path of a car and was killed.
(Level III, Negative Outcome)

13. Perry was watching a house that was burning down. As he watched, a small child appeared at a window and called for help. Most of the people there thought there was so much fire that no one should go into the house. Perry ran in and pulled the child to safety.
(Level IV, Positive Outcome)

14. Perry was fishing when he saw a boy drowning in the river. Perry could not swim, but he fought his way out to the boy and pulled him out.
(Level IV, Positive Outcome)

15. Perry put poison in a coca cola and gave it to another boy. The boy drank the coke and died from the poison.
(Level IV, Negative Outcome)

16. Perry was playing with another boy. He decided to kill the other boy so he stabbed him to death with a knife he had been playing with.
(Level IV, Negative Outcome)

17. A little boy was lost in a large cave. Everyone was afraid to go in the cave because they might get lost too. A much bigger boy told Perry he would knock off his head if he did not go hunt for the lost boy. Perry went into the cave, found the boy, and brought him to safety.
(Level V, Positive Outcome)

18. A small child had crawled into the pasture with a very mean bull that had gored several people to death. The little boy's brother, who was bigger than Perry, picked up a club and told Perry that he would beat him to death if he didn't go into the pasture and save the child. Perry dashed in front of the angry bull and pulled the child to safety.
(Level V, Positive Outcome)

19. Another boy tried to kill Perry with a large knife. Perry grabbed the knife and stabbed the other boy to death to keep from being killed himself.
(Level V, Negative Outcome)

20. Perry was taking some money to the bank for his father. A man attacked and threatened to kill Perry if he did not give him the money. Perry picked up a rock, hit the man on the head and killed him.
(Level V, Negative Outcome)

Part 2: Dependent Measures Used in Experiment II

[Note: These three items followed each of the situations described in Part 1 of this appendix.]

a. How responsible is Perry for the Outcome:

Responsible :___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___: Not responsible

b. Was the outcome good or bad?

Good :___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___: Bad

c. How moral do you think Perry was?

Immoral :___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___: Moral

APPENDIX D

EXPERIMENT III

Part 1: Consequences Used in Experiment III

High Magnitude/Positive Consequences

1. a cure for a major disease is found.
2. a needy family gets $20,000.
3. a teenager is saved from drowning.
4. a child lost in the wilderness is found.
5. a child's life is saved.
6. a little girl gets the life-saving operation she needs.
7. a young boy is saved from dying in a fire.
8. a little girl regains the use of once-paralyzed legs.

High Magnitude/Negative Consequences

1. a stranger burns to death.
2. a child starves to death.
3. a child receives lasting psychological damage.
4. a bystander's back is broken.
5. a little boy loses his eyesight.
6. a passerby is horribly disfigured.
7. a stranger drowns.
8. a child becomes permanently crippled.

Low Magnitude/Positive Consequences

1. an orphan gets a dollar.
2. a little girl doesn't have to go out in a rainstorm.
3. a dog gets a bone to eat.
4. an old woman gets her garded weeded.
5. a team wins the football game.
6. a child gets a free ticket to a movie.
7. a little boy gets a new radio.
8. a little boy gets a free dinner.

Low Magnitude/Negative Consequences

1. a stranger's car breaks down.
2. an acquaintance is late for an appointment.
3. a stranger gets a flat tire.
4. some dishes are broken.
5. a fishing rod is broken
6. a passerby's coat gets dirty.
7. a window gets broken.
8. a child has to miss lunch.

Part 2: Dependent Measures Used in Experiment III

[Note: These three items followed each of the sentences which described the compatibility of the action with a moral standard and the consequences.]

1. How moral do you feel X is?

Immoral :____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____:____.____.____: Moral

2. Was X's action compatible or incompatible with this society's standards of morality?

Compatible :___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___: Incompatible

3. How responsible is X for what happened?

Responsible :___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___:___.___.___: Not responsible

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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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